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THE TRANSFORMATION OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY FROM AN ESCHATOLOGICAL TO A SOCIALIZED MOVEMENT

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND LITERATURE
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH HISTORY IN THE GRADUATE DIVINITY SCHOOL

BY

LYFORD PATERSON EDWARDS, Ph.D.

The Collegiate Press
GEORGE BANTA PUBLISHING COMPANY
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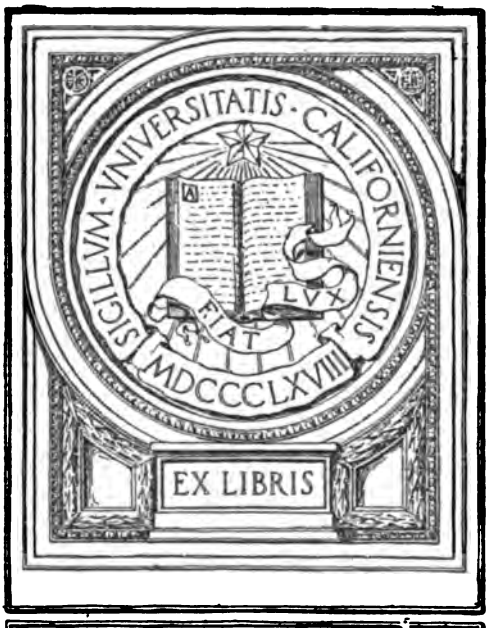
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CHAPTER I

THE POLITICAL THEORIES OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS

When Christianity came into the world it found a number of different political theories already in existence. These various conflicting concepts; Hebrew, Greek and Roman, influenced Christianity in varying degrees and in varying degrees were influenced by Christianity. Christianity as such added no new ideas to the current stock of political notions. The Hebrew Christian retained his Jewish theory; as did the Greek and the Roman in perhaps a less degree. The development of the Christian conception of the state, the Church, and history generally is a process of elimination, selection, adaptation, and synthesis of the various elements of political theory current in contemporary Hebrew and pagan thought.

The characteristic modern separation of Church and State, the divorce between religion and government, existed as a matter of fact in early Christianity. But it was forced upon the Christians by the historical situation. As an idea it was foreign alike to Jews and Christians, Greeks and Romans. It was contrary to the whole body of contemporary political theory. The union of Church and State in the Fourth century, which has been so deplored by many modern historians and moralists was in reality perfectly inevitable. The social mind of the whole ancient world made any other course impossible either to Christians or Pagans once Christianity had developed to the point where it was the most powerful religious force in society.

The theocratic nature of Jewish thought and practice is generally recognized but the close connection of religion and government in the pagan educational system is not perhaps so much emphasized. To quote Pollock: "It costs us something to realize the full importance of philosophy to the Greek or Roman citizen who had received a liberal education. For him it combined in one whole body of doctrine all the authority and influence which nowadays are divided, not without contention, by science, philosophy, and religion in varying shares. It was not an intellectual exercise or special study, but a serious endeavor to gather up the results of all human knowledge in

their most general form, and make them available for the practical conduct of life."[1]

It was this fact which made Christianity's progress among the educated classes so slow. Once it had made its way, however, the taking over of political control by the Church was both easy and natural.

One of the most notable characteristics of the New Testament and of all early Christianity in its relation to the existing political system was the doctrine of obedience to the constituted authorities. That a man like St. Paul should advocate submission to a man like Nero seems like the negation of elementary morality. The reasons for this attitude are many. In this paper we are concerned only with one of them—but possibly the most important one. The submissiveness of the early Christians to tyranny and despotism was not due primarily to impotence nor yet to excessive mildness of disposition. Many emperors before Constantine were deposed and slain by political groups smaller and feebler than the Christians. St. Paul and St. Ignatius, to go no farther, were not by nature pacifists. It would be difficult to find a book of a more militant tone than the Revelation of St. John.

The main reason for the political non-resistance of the early Christians is to be sought in their philosophy; their views of the world. These views were of a very special and very peculiar kind. They were in large part either directly inherited from Jewish thought or adapted from it. While they are in some respects inconsistent with one another, they have a common element. They are all catastrophic. In all of them the catastrophy is more or less immediately imminent.

The Old Testament Prophets taught the establishment, in the indefinite future, of an eternal Messianic kingdom on this present earth. For a long time this hope was cherished by every Jew. But some time before the beginning of the First Century B.C. a change took place. The old conception was abandoned, slowly indeed, but at last absolutely. In its place arose a belief which developed into Chiliasm or Millenarianism. Perhaps the first clear statement of this new idea is to be found in the book known as I Enoch. In this

[1] F. Pollock, Essays in Jurisprudence and Ethics, p. 314.

work which dates from 104–95 B.C., the Messianic kingdom is for the first time conceived of as of temporary duration. The resurrection and final judgement which in the preceding form of belief were the prelude to the everlasting Messianic kingdom on earth, are now transposed to the end of the transitory, early kingdom of the Messiah. This temporary earthly kingdom is no longer the final abode of the risen righteous. They are to enjoy a blessed immortality in the eternal heaven.[2]

We have in this author a practically complete statement of later Christian Chiliasm. There is indeed one important feature missing. The specific duration of the Messianic kingdom is not given. The advent of the kingdom also is not pressingly imminent.

In the Parables 94–64 B.C. we find certain other elements. This writer holds to the eternal Messianic kingdom but the scene of this kingdom is not the earth as at present existing but a new heaven and a new earth. The Messiah is no longer a mere man but a supernatural being. Four titles characteristic of the New Testament are for the first time applied to him: "The Christ," "The Righteous One," "The Elect One," "The Son of Man." He executes judgment on man and enjoys universal dominion. The resurrection is not of the old body but of a body of glory and light, of an angelic nature, in short a spiritual body, though the specific word spiritual is not used.[3]

In the other eschatological works of this period: e.g. Psalms of Solomon 70–40 B.C. Judith (circa 50 B.C.) [one reference]; The Sibylline Oracles III 1–62 (before 31 B.C.); The Epitomiser of Jason of Cyrene (between 100–40 B.C.) and the fragmentary Zadokite Work, 18 B.C., the tradition of the temporary kingdom is carried on but without the addition of any concepts essential to our purpose.

In the first century A.D., still confining ourselves to specifically Jewish Apocalyptic literature we find various changes taking place. The eternal Messianic kingdom passes largely out. The temporary Messianic kingdom becomes an eternal national one. The interest of the individual Jew comes to center on his own lot in the future life.[4] We have to pass a number of writers; Assumption of Moses,

[2] Cf. I Enoch XCI–CIV.
[3] Cf. Parables in I Enoch XXXVII–LXXI.
[4] Cf. Apocalypse of Baurch; 4 Ezra, 4 Maccabees.

Philo, etc., before we come to the specific statement of Chiliasm proper, i.e., the duration of the Messianic kingdom for 1000 years. In the Book of The Secrets of Enoch commonly known as II Enoch (1-50 A.D.) we find for the first time the doctrine which was taken over to make the Christian Millennium. The writer of II Enoch was an Egyptian Jew. He says that as the world was made in six days, its course will run for six thousand years. The 6000 years will be followed by a Messianic kingdom of rest and blessedness lasting 1000 years. After that follows the final judgment, "The great day of the Lord."

Passing now to the New Testament, it is only necessary for our purpose to enumerate three different concepts of the Messianic kingdom that are found therein. In these concepts contemporaneous Jewish ideas are taken with more or less transformation.

The first conception perhaps holds the idea of a present world kingdom but puts emphasis on the futurity of the kingdom. Its ultimate consumation is not by gradual, natural development, but by the catastrophic reappearance of Christ. This Second Advent is to be preceeded by tremendous portents of the most terrible sort.

The second conception is that the kingdom is already present in Christ's appearance as the Messiah. It is to grow by the natural laws of spiritual development to its full realization. A considerable length of time is conceived as necessary for the attainment of mature growth. The consumation of the kingdom in the Second Advent is to be unexpected and sudden and none but the Father knows when it will take place.

The third conception, that of Chiliasm, is that the Second Advent of Christ is close at hand. Anti Christ and his confederates are to be destroyed at Megiddo. Satan is to be bound for 1000 years during which is the Millennium, when the martyrs are raised in the first resurrection and reign with Christ at Jerusalem. This conception is found in the Revelation and perhaps I Cor. XV, 24-27. All the essential elements of it are to be found in pre-existing sources, e.g., the 1000 years in II Enoch, the reign of the saints in Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, etc.

These three conceptions were variously confused in early Christianity. All the New Testament writers hold, for instance, to the immediately imminent Second Advent. How many of them were

Chiliasts we have no way of knowing. The earliest, Christian writing extant outside the New Testament, which deals with this subject is perhaps Papias, 70–155 A.D. He is a most materialistic Chiliast and quotes II Baruch as an authentic utterance of Christ handed to himself by apostolic tradition.[5]

Barnabas is another apostolic Chiliast. He expressly teaches a millennial reign of Christ on earth. The six days of creation are the type of six periods of 1000 years each. The seventh day is the millennium, since with God "one day is as a thousand years." The earthly, millennial sabbath is to be followed by an eighth and eternal day in heaven. The Millennium is near at hand. Barnabas does not quote Revelation. His views can be drawn equally well or better from II Enoch, I Enoch and other Jewish sources.

The first Chiliast we know of to get into disrepute was the famous heretic, Cerinthus, (last part of first century). His heresy had nothing to do with his Chiliasm, as it seems to have been a sort of Judaistic Gnosticism and Gnosticism in general was not favorable to Chiliasm. However the fact that so abhorrent a heretic held Chiliastic views did not help those views in the judgment of later Christians.

About the end of the first century also Chiliasm came into rather disreputable prominence as a leading doctrine of the Ebionites, a sect of antitrinitarian Judaistic-Christian heretics. This sect was wide spread though not particularly numerous and aroused the bitter antagonism of the orthodox. As in the case of Cerinthus, their heresy had nothing necessarily to do with Chiliasm. But here again Chiliasm had the misfortune to get into bad company.

In the middle of the second century Chiliasm appears to have been the belief of the majority of Christians though it never found formal expression in any creed. Justin Martyn, 110–165 A.D., tells us that Christ is to reign with the patriarchs for 1000 years in a rebuilt Jerusalem. He bases this belief on Rev. XX, 4-5 and says he holds this doctrine as part of the body of Christian faith. He adds, however, that "many good and true Christians think otherwise." This later statement is the more notable as it is the only difference between orthodox Christians which he mentions. He places the Ebionites outside the Christian pale.

[5] Irenaeus Adv. Haer. V 33. II Baruch XXIX.

The first non-Chiliasts we meet with in Christian history are the Gnostics. Of their actual position on Chiliasm we know practically nothing except by inference. They did not apparently fight it. They simply tacitly ignored it. In the long and minute descriptions of various Gnostic systems that have come down to us nothing is said on the subject; but the systems as outlined leave no place for the Chiliastic doctrines.

The first open enemies of Chiliasm that are to be found in the Church are the Alogi, a sect that flourished in Asia Minor about 160–180 A.D. According to Harnack: "The representatives of this movement were, as far as we know, the first in the Church to undertake a historical criticism, worthy of the name, of the Christian scriptures and the Church tradition."[6] They were rationalisticly inclined, desired to keep prophecy out of the Church and denied on essentially the same internal grounds as modern students, the Johannine authorship of the Revelation and also of the Fourth Gospel. With less reason they ascribed the Revelation to the heretic Cerinthus. Unfortunately we know but little about them. Hippolytus wrote against them and defended the apostolic authorship of Revelation and the Fourth Gospel in two books now lost. But the Alogi are criticised only mildly, and indeed Irenaeus does not class them as heretics at all. Opposition to Chiliasm was manifestly not looked upon as an important matter in the last quarter of the second century—at least in Rome.[7] To this same period belong the writings of Gaius of Rome who asserts that the Heretic Cerinthus wrote the Revelation, and also those of Bishop Melito of Sardis, a saint of great repute, who was an ardent Chiliast. So that at this period both Chiliasm and non-Chiliasm would seem to be perhaps equally wide spread and certainly equally permissable. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons 120–202 A.D., was a strong Chiliast. He describes in minute detail the overthrow of the Roman Empire, the reign of Anti-Christ for 1260 days (three and half years) the visible advent of Christ, the binding of Satan, the joyful reign of Christ in the rebuilt Jerusalem with the risen saints and martyrs over the nations of the world for a thousand years. Then follows the temporary raging of

[6] Hist. of Dogma, Vol. III, p. 19.

[7] Ens. H. E. VI 27-2.

Satan, the last victory, the general resurrection and judgment, and the consumation of all things in a new heaven and a new earth.

The ascription of genuine divine inspiration to the Sibylline Oracles by the early Church writers is well known. It is a noteworthy fact that the Chiliasts[8] seem to be much more inclined to quote the Oracles than the non-Chiliasts. The Christians' addiction to the Oracles called forth the derision of Celsus.[9] Origen makes no defense and it is at least possible to conjecture that the reason is that he disapproved of the use made of the Oracles by the Chiliasts. The Oracles were of course made use of by all sorts of agencies which for any reason wished ill to the Roman authority and yet dared not indulge in secular sedition. Some enthusiastic Chiliast put forth an Oracle, probably in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, which was more definite than prudent. According to this prediction the end of Rome and the final consumation of all things was due in the year 195–196 A.D.[10] There is reason to believe that this prophecy represented the belief of a considerable number of Christian Chiliasts. While there is no extant evidence to that effect, it is a rational deduction, that when the year 195–196 A.D. passed without any unusual occurrences, the prestige of the persons trusting the Oracle would be damaged. So far as these persons were Chiliasts, Chiliasm would suffer in repute. That this was actually the case is as nearly certain as any logical conclusion about psychological reactions well can be.

About the year 156 A.D. there arose in Phrygia the movement called Montanism. Essentially it was a reaction against the growing secularization of Christianity. It spread to the rest of Asia Minor, Egypt, Italy, Spain, and especially Carthage and surrounding districts in North Africa. It was the strongest movement in favor of a revival of primitive Puritanism that occurs in early Church history. It lasted in the East almost till the Arab Invasion; in the West it did not die out until the time of Augustine. The Montanists are the most pronounced Chiliasts we meet with. Not indeed in their theory but in their practice. One Syrian Montanist bishop "Persuaded many brethren with their wives and children to go to meet Christ in the wilderness; another in Pontus induced his people to sell

[8] Justin Martyn, Tertullian, Lactantius.
[9] Ad. Celsus LXI.
[10] Sib. Orac. VIII, 148 seq.

all their possessions, to cease tilling their lands, to conclude no more marriages, etc., because the coming of the Lord was nigh at hand."[11] The Montanist prophetess, Prisca, about 165 A.D. said: "After me there will come no other prophetess but the end." A peculiarity of eastern Montanistic Chiliasm was the idea that Christ would reign not in Jerusalem but in Pepuza, a small town in Phrygia. In accord with this idea Montanus tried to get all believers to settle in this town to await the Lord's coming. The western Montanists however, of whom Tertullian was chief, held to the regular belief that the Messianic kingdom would be centered in Jerusalem.

Because of certain theological beliefs aside from Chiliasm, the Montanists aroused the antagonism of the Church authorities. The earliest Church councils to be met with after New Testament times were called for the purpose of dealing with Montanism which was finally denounced as a heresy and after the triumph of the Church some imperial edicts were issued against the sect. For the first time in the attack on Montanism at the end of the second and early part of the third Century we find Chiliastic beliefs referred to as 'carnal and Jewish.' There is no formal condemnation of Chiliasm as such, but once more, and much more seriously than in the case of the Ebionites, Chiliasm suffered from being associated in the minds of orthodox Christians with heresy and schism. It would however be very easy to exaggerate the effect of this and it is necessary to bear in mind that while the literature of Montanism is fairly considerable, Chiliasm is an entirely subordinate matter in the controversy and indeed seems sometimes to be mentioned merely casually. The Chiliastic writers are perhaps more inclined to view Montanism leniently. Irenaeus does not include it in his list of heresies.

Its association with Montanism brought Chiliasm into disrepute and suspicion with the Church hierarchy and it is not surprising that beginning with the last years of the second century we find a deliberate system of suppression adopted by certain ecclesiastical authorities —notably in Egypt. As we shall try to show later, the declension of Chiliasm can be only very imperfectly explained by official antagonism. But so far as this declension can be ascribed to individuals, the three great Alexandrian divines; Clement, Origen, and Dionysius have a prominent part. The influence of these men counted the more

[11] Hippolytus, Com. on Daniel.

as it was consistently exercised in the same locality with increasing force during a period of more than half a century. The first of these writers, Clement (150–216 A.D.) does not specifically refer to the Chiliasts but there are a number of passages where he evidently has them in mind.[12] However the probability is that this very refraining from direct attack made his efforts the more successful. He emphasizes the fact that scriptural statements—particularly scriptural numbers—are not to be taken literally but are to be understood as of mystical significance. If Clement consciously aimed at the extirpation of Chiliasm (which is not absolutely certain) he at any rate took the most effective means for accomplishing that result. The great presupposition upon which Christian Chiliasm has been based is that of the literal interpretation of Scripture. By attacking that presupposition Clement caused the doctrine to be questioned by many persons whose attachment to Chiliasm would doubtless have only been strengthened by direct attack upon that tenet in particular. He prepared the way for the open and far more powerful attacks upon Chiliasm made by his great successor in the Catechetical School, Origen (185–254 A.D.). The position of this great theologian is the most equivocal of any writer who has attained eminence in Christian theology. How far anything he wrote is to be considered as orthodox is a most difficult matter to determine. The fact that Origen opposed Chiliasm, taken by itself, apart from the subsequent fate of the doctrine, could just as easily be made a commendation as a condemnation of that belief. Almost alone among Christian men Origen has been removed from the calendar of Catholic saints after having been duly received as a saint for the space of more than a hundred and fifty years. This unique fact, which is of course of far more importance for theology than for history, has nevertheless a bearing on our subject. The condemnation of Origen came too late to save the Chiliastic apologetic in the East but it very possibly may have had an indirect influence in the matter of continuing the repute of western Chiliasm.

Origen attacked Chiliasm in two vital points: First he insisted even more strongly than Clement upon the figurative or mystical or 'typical' interpretation of Scripture. In this regard he specifically quotes a number of Chiliastic passages of scripture and definitely

[12] Strom. VII, 17; VI 16; IV 25; V 6, 14.

says that their meaning is to be taken figuratively.[13] But more important than that, he definitely substitutes the theory of progressive development of the intellectual and spiritual element of man for the physical and sensuous earthly kingdom of the Chiliasts. This was certainly a great gain for the anti-Chiliastic theory which for the first time took a logical and comprehensible if a somewhat metaphysical form. However it must be admitted that the argument of Origen though wonderfully clear headed and almost miraculously modern[14] is too purely intellectual and cast in too philosophical a form to have any direct influence on ordinary individuals. It was doubtless quite in place in the Catechetical School and among scholars in the great centers of ancient learning but outside those limits its influence—at least directly—must have been very small. Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, answered Origen in a book entitled: "Refutation of Allegorists." This book is lost but we know that it was considered by the Chiliasts to be a work of the most powerful and indeed irrefutable sort. In the Arsinoite nome (on the west bank of the Nile south of Memphis) the Chiliastic doctrines were held by whole villages together and Dionysius the Great (Bishop of Alexandria 247–264 A.D.) found it necessary to visit this region and hold a public argument and instruction in order to avert a schism. By the tact and conciliatory attitude of the Bishop the Chiliasts were either won over to the non-Chiliastic view or at least expressed their gratification at the conference. It would appear, however, as if this synod or meeting was not sufficient to destroy the influence of Nepos' book so Dionysius wrote in refutation of it two books "On the Promises." Except for a few fragments these books have perished. We know merely that the first book contained a statement of the non-Chiliastic view and the second a detailed discussion of the Revelation in relation to Chiliasm and to the views of Nepos.

However, Dionysius, who was well aware that as long as the 'Revelation of St. John' was received as a genuine work of the Apostle it would be difficult to oppose Chiliasm, gives a very strong argument against the apostolic authorship while diplomatically saying at the beginning of his discussion that he is able to agree that the Revelation

[13] De Princ, II, 11.

[14] Cf. e.g., A. R. Wallace, The World of Life.

is the work of a holy and inspired man."[15] There is no reason to doubt that this refutation of Nepos by Dionysius met with success wherever Christian Hellenisticism exercised influence. But it by no means extirpated Chiliasm in Egypt. For many generations after its author's death Chiliasm was still believed by the monks of the Thebiad. In fact a large number of Jewish Apocalyses which the early Christians accepted as inspired are preserved to us bound up in Coptic and Ethiopic copies of the scriptures. The Alexandrians had, however, succeeded so well that in the subsequent period there are only two defenders of Chiliasm in the Eastern Church that are worthy of mention. These two are Methodius of Tyre and Apollinaris of Laodicea.

Methodius 260–312 A.D. was bishop first of Olympus and Patara in Lycia and afterwards of Tyre in Phoenicia. He is notable for his opposition to Origen and for his relatively more spiritualized Chiliasm. He maintains that in the Mellennium, death will be abolished and the inhabitants of the earth will not marry or beget children but live in all happiness like the angels without change or decay. He is very careful to insist upon the literal resurrection of the body, however, and emphasizes the fact that the risen saints while like the angels do not become angels.[16] He died a martyr at Chalcis in Greece.

Apollinaris of Laodicea (300?–390 A.D.) is a notable figure in Christological controversy but unfortunately very little that he wrote has come down to us, and of that little the authenticity is not entirely unimpeachable. We are constrained to get his Chiliastic views from the writings of his theological opponents and unfortunately there is not wanting evidence to the effect that these opponents, Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, notable Christians as they were, were not lacking in bias. Gregory[17] calls the Chiliastic doctrine of the Apolinarians 'gross and carnal,' a 'second Judaism' and speaks of 'their silly thousand years delight in paradise.' Basil[18] calls the Chiliasm of Apolinaris 'mythical or rather Jewish,' 'ridiculous,' and 'contrary to the doctrines of the Gospel.' This is, so far as the writer is aware, the first instance in which any great theologian goes to

[15] Eus. H. E. VII 25.
[16] Discourse on the Resurrection, I, 9 seq. See also Conviv. IX, 1, 5.
[17] Ep. CII, 4.
[18] Ep. CCLXIII, 4.

such extremes and Basil's language, though strong, is not altogether without an element of hesitation and questioning. In short it would seem that he asserted more than he felt sure of being able to prove—no rare phenomenon unfortunately in certain of the great contraversialists. If Basil's statements are to be taken at their face value Apolinaris was indeed the most Judaising Christian in his Chiliasm of any of whom we have record. He would seem to justify Basil's jibe 'we are to be altogether turned from Christians into Jews,' for in his Messianic kingdom not only is the Temple at Jerusalem to be restored but also the worship of the old Law, with high priest, sacrifices, the ashes of a heifer, the jealousy offering, shew bread, burning lamps, circumcision and other such things which Basil indignantly denounces as 'figments,' 'mere old wives fables' and 'doctrines of Jews.'[19] Although Apolinarianism was condemned by a council at Alexandria as early as 362 A.D. and Roman councils followed suit in 377 and 378 and the second Ecumenical Council in 381 and though Imperial degrees were issued against it in 388, 397 and 428 it persisted for many generations. The last condemnation on record is that of the Quinisextum Synod 691 A.D.

In this case, as in others mentioned, we see the unfortunate fate of Chiliasm in getting mixed up with heresies with which it, as such, had nothing to do. The extraordinary detestation which overtook Apollinaris as arch-heretic par excellence seems to have finally discouraged Chiliasm in the Eastern Church. It was reckoned as a heresy thereafter and though it appears sporadically down to our own day it is of no more interest for our purpose.

In the Western Church Chiliasm prevailed until the time of Augustine. It seems to have provoked very little discussion or controversy. Hippolytus, 235 A.D., carries on the Chiliastic tradition of Irenaeus but with a certain degree of assured futurity about the Second Advent not found in the earlier writers. This pushing of the Second Advent into the future is a marked feature of Western Chiliasm. By a weird use of 'types' Hippolytus proves with entire conclusiveness to himself that the Second Advent is to occur in the year 500 A.D.[20] The overthrow of Rome has a prominent part in his elaborate description of the last times but he veils his statements with

[19] Cp. CCLXV, 2.

[20] 'Frag. Dan. I, 5, 6.

a certain amount of transparent discretion.[21] He has in all other essential respects the same ideas as Irenaeus but expressed in a less naïve form. He is a transition figure. His Second Advent is far enough off to allow some considerable latitude for the building up of the ecclesiastical hierarchy which was the business of Rome and he emphasizes the point that the "gospel must first be preached to all nations." John the Baptist reappears as the precursor of Christ.

Commodianus, a North African bishop, 240 A.D., represents the generation after Hippolytus. His two poems present rather different versions of Chiliasm. The first is a simple and rather pleasing version.[22] The only notable variation it contains is that the risen saints in the Millennial Kingdom are to be served by the nobles of the conquered anti-Christ. The second poem is an apologetic against Jews and Gentiles. "The author expects the end of the world will come with the seventh persecution. The Goths will conquer Rome and redeem the Christians; but then Nero will appear again as the heathen anti-Christ, reconquer Rome and rage against the Christians three years and a half. He will in turn be conquered by the Jewish and real anti-Christ from the East, who, after the defeat of Nero and the burning of Rome, will return to Judea, perform false miracles and be worshipped by the Jews. At last Christ appears with the lost tribes, as his army, who had lived beyond Persia in happy simplicity and virtue. Under astounding phenomena of nature he will conquer anti-Christ and his host, convert all nations and take possession of the holy city of Jerusalem."[23] This double anti-Christ is perhaps the most notable variation. This idea reappears later, as does the Nero return which would seem to have been current belief.

There are perhaps only two other writers before Augustine that are worthy of mention, Victorinus and Lactantius. Victorinus, bishop of Poetovio, i.e., Petair in Austria, martyred 304 A.D., is the earliest exegete of the Latin Church. His 'Commentary on the Apocalypse' has come down to us in bad shape. The Chiliasm is of a type which may be described as formal and ritualistic in the sense that it is expressed in a matter of fact way as something not needing

[21] De Christo et Antic. 50.
[22] Instructions, LXXX.
[23] Schaff Hist., ii, 855. Sec. LXVII of poem.

explanation, much less proof. There are only two new ideas: "The first resurrection is now of the souls that are by the faith, which does not permit men to pass over to the second death"[24] and "Those years wherein Satan is bound are in the first advent of Christ even to the end of the age; and they are called a thousand according to that mode of speaking wherein a part is signified by the whole—although they are not a thousand."[25]

Lactantius the preceptor of Crispus, son of Constantine, brings us to the Chiliasm of the established Church. The end of the present age and the coming of the millennial kingdom are at the latest 200 years in the future, probably nearer, but the event instead of being looked toward to, is dreaded. The forthcoming destruction of Rome is bewailed. The world is safe as long as Rome stands. Nero is to be anti-Christ. "They who shall be alive in their bodies shall not die, but during those thousand years shall produce an infinite multitude, and their offspring shall be holy and beloved of God; but they who shall be raised from the dead shall preside over the living as judges. The nations shall not be entirely extinguished, but some shall be left as a victory for God, that they may be the occasion of triumph to the righteous and may be subjected to perpetual slavery."[26] The Chiliasm of Lactantius is proved from the Sibylline Oracles and from the philosopher Chrysippus, a Stoic. For the rest Lactantius repeats the traditional Christian and pre-Christian Jewish Chiliastic concepts with very little variation, but it is evident that the fact that the fall of Rome is dreaded will work out a change. The Chiliasm of Lactantius is unstable, not that there is the slightest breath of doubt about it, but that the attitude of mind which looked forward with dread to the Second Advent could be depended upon to find a theory for postponing it. Chiliasm is ready for its transformation.

In the century between Lactantius and Augustine there is no Chiliast of note in the west. It is aboundantly evident however, from the works of Augustine that Chiliasm was common during that period as well as in the time of Augustine. Indeed Augustine himself was a Chiliast though probably not an exceedingly literal one, during his early

[24] Comm. XX 4.5.
[25] Comm. XX 1.3.
[26] Div. Ins. Bk. 7 XXIV.

period in the Church.[27] It is certain that he never regarded the doctrine as heretical. Even in the very book in which he puts forth the doctrine which eventually superseded Chiliasm he says: "This opinion would not be objectionable if it were believed that the joys of the saints in that Sabbath[27] shall be spiritual and consequent on the presence of God."[28] We have in this quotation a hint as to the reason why he abandoned Chiliasm. He elaborates this in the immediately following passage: "As they say that those who then rise again shall enjoy the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, such assertions can be believed only by the carnal."[29]

Disgust with this literal interpretation of the scripture was thus one of the reasons which drew Augustine away from Chiliasm. A more direct reason was that he had an idea of his own as to how the Chiliastic Scriptural passage[30] should be interpreted.

The discussion in which he vanquishes the Chiliastic concept is a model of contraversial method. It would be difficult to find its superior either in sacred or profane polemics. Perfectly conscious of his own powers to make Chiliasm appear at once absurd and ridiculous he refrains from doing so. Abundantly able though he was to refute the Millennians point by point he deliberately foregoes that method of attack. His argument which overthrew an ancient, famous, and widespread doctrine of primitive Christianity contains hardly a line either of refutation or condemnation. It is perhaps the finest example in Christian literature of the 'positive apologetic.' The Chiliastic literature, even that which has come down to us, contains so much that is fantastic and ludicrous that it would have been very easy for a man of far less power than Augustine to hold it up to contempt and scorn. It abounds in the same kind of absurdities and incongruities as the pagan myths which proviked so many stinging pages from the early apologists and from Augustine himself. The fact that Augustine did not yield to the temptation to make his opponents ridiculous is in the highest degree creditable to his head

[27] C.D. XX 7.
[28] I.e., the Millennium.
[29] C.D. XX 7.
[30] Rev. XX.

and his heart. He did not violate the precepts of Christian charity and he obtained a victory greater than would have been within even his power had he yielded to the natural temptation of a great intellect to show up the mental inferiority of his opponents.

It is interesting to compare Augustine's treatment of Chiliasm with Origen's. The two men are very comparable as regards extent and variety of knowledge, intellectual power, and philosophic insight. They are very unlike however, in their treatment of the subject. Origen simply explains away the whole Chiliastic concept or rather so spiritualizes it that nothing resembling the original idea is left. His whole insistence is that it must be taken figuratively, and without the least warrant he asserts that his interpretation is "according to the understanding of the apostles."[31] He makes the whole subject so subjective, so intellectual, so metaphysical that there is left no content for the ordinary man to hold to in place of that which is demolished. In the overthrow of Eastern Chiliasm Origen holds as conspicuous a position as Augustine in the overthrow of Western. He did away with a doctrine, too carnal perhaps, but at any rate concrete and comforting, and he substituted an intellectual abstraction. For instance in explaining, or better explaining away, the Chiliastic feasts in the New Jerusalem he says:[32] "The rational nature growing by each individual step, enlarged in understanding and in power of perception is increased in intellectual growth; and ever gazing purely on the causes of things it attains perfection, firstly, viz., that by which it ascends to the truth, and secondly that by which it abides in it, having problems and the understanding of things and the causes of things as the food on which it may feast. And in all things this food is to be understood as the contemplation and understanding of God, which is of a measure appropriate and suitable to this nature, which was made and created, etc."

This kind of thing is the intellectual equivalent of the process in physics by which the scientist takes some tangible solid body and proceeds first to liquify it, then to volitilize it and finally to blow it entirely away. We strongly suspect that the Eastern Chiliasts felt that the whole thing was a kleptistic legerdemain by which they were

[31] De Prin. II, 11, 3.

[32] De Prin. II, 11, 7.

deprived of a favorite doctrine without receiving anything in place of it.

Augustine's method differs toto caelo from this. While Origen handles the subject like a metaphysician, Augustine handles it like a statesman. His doctrine is just as concrete as the one he displaces. He takes nothing away without giving something equally tangible and of better quality in its place. The transition from Chiliasm to the Origenistic conception of the future, would be, for the ordinary person, an incredible and almost impossible intellectual feat. The transition from Chiliasm to the Augustinian conception of the future is natural, easy, and perfectly within the power of a very ordinary and commonplace mentality. As a matter of fact it made its way without the smallest difficulty into the religious consciousness of the whole of western Christianity. Any person who aims at changing the theological opinions of others can find no better manual of method than the twentieth book of the City of God. Augustine was very careful to keep all the symbols, catch words, and paraphernalia of Chiliasm. He was careful not only to keep them all but to keep them all in their literal sense. He explains away none of them and allegorizes none of them. By carefully preserving the ancient shibboleths he was easily able to empty them of their former content. He holds to the millennium, the idea that is, of thousand years, as firmly as any Chiliast but he says the thousand years is to be reckoned as dating from the establishment of the Church on earth i.e., the first coming of Christ. So he is careful to preserve the phrase: "The Reign of the Saints"; he merely substitutes for the Chiliastic content of that phase the very comfortable and plausable doctrine that the saints are his own Christian contemporaries. He is very skillful, not to say flattering, in his method of 'putting this across.' So he retains similarly the old formula about the two resurrections—but makes the first resurrection out to be the marvelous transformation and participation in the resurrection of Christ which the Christian experiences by virtue of the sacrament of baptism. More important still is his new content for the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven." This instead of a state of future blessedness becomes the already existing church on earth. Finally he indulges in a long and apparently straight faced discussion as to whether the reign of anti-Christ—which he preserves in its most literal form with the regulation

duration of three years and a half—whether this is to be reckoned as part of the thousand years or not. This inconsequential detail is labored at length in such a manner as to delight the soul of any good Bible reading Chiliast. By preserving till the last this single element of Chiliasm which he leaves untouched and then treating it in the good, old, religious fashion of Irenaeus or some other primitive worthy, he very skillfully disarms criticism and it is only by a strong effort that the reader realizes what a tremendous blow has been struck at the original Chiliastic doctrine.

Let us see what the changes of Augustine amount to. It is not less than the total destruction of Chiliasm, or at the very least the postponement of the end of the world till the year 1000 A.D. Augustine's doctrine is essentially that of the ordinary, orthodox, Bible Christian today. Sometime in the future—Augustine said possibly in the year 1000 A.D.—Christ was to come again to the earth. Then follows the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and heaven and hell. The questions about the three years and a half of anti-Christ, together with Gog and Magog—great favorites with the Chiliasts—are held to be insoluable as to the time of their appearance; whether to be reckoned as part of the thousand years or immediately succeeding it.

It is commonly said that Augustine is responsible for the belief that the world was to come to an end in the year 1000 A.D. This is not strictly correct. Augustine nowhere makes that direct assertion. He nowhere—so far as the writer is aware—even implies it. What he does is to offer it as a possible alternative hypothesis to the idea that the thousand years, (since 1000 is the cube of 10,) is to be taken as a statement of the total duration of the world. As the matter is of some interest we give the original passage in Dod's translation:[33] "Now the thousand years may be understood in two ways so far as occurs to me: either because these things happen in the sixth thousand of years or sixth millennium (the latter part of which is now passing) as if during the sixth day, which is to be followed by a sabbath which has no evening, the endless rest of the saints, so that, speaking of a part under the name of the whole, he calls the last part of the millennium—the part that is which had yet to expire before the end of the world—a thousand years; or he used the thousand

[33] City of God in Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, 1st Series, Vol. II, p. 427.

years as an equivalent for the whole duration of this world, employing the number of perfection to mark the fullness of time. For a thousand is the cube of ten. . . . For the same reason we cannot better interpret the words of the psalm. "The word which he commanded to a thousand generations," than by understanding it to mean, "to all generations."

The above sketch summarizes essentially all that has survived about the Chiliasm of the early Church. The Chiliastic passages in the Church literature up to and including Augustine, though rather widely scattered, are not great in bulk. If printed together they would make only a moderate sized pamphlet. But their importance is by no means to be measured by their size. Chiliasm, better than any other movement of the early period, serves as a standard for measuring the degree of the socialization of Christianity. It comprises the only body of doctrine which passed from practically universal acceptance to practically universal repudiation during the period when the Church changed from a small esoteric cult to a dominant factor of society. Considered from this point of view, the causes of the decline of Chiliasm possess a historical importance out of all proportion to the importance of Chiliasm itself. More than any other religious movement of the time Chiliasm was free from the direct pressure of distinctly religious influences. Its declension was more nearly a case of unconscious social and psychological determinism than any other contemporary theological phenomenon. Its chief supporters and opponents are not to be regarded so much as factors in its history, as points where the socializing forces operating in the early Church become for the moment visible.

Certain facts stand out even in the short epitome we have given. Chiliasm never became powerful in the great cities. It survived longest and was most popular in regions[34] comparatively cut off from the great centers of civilization. Hellenizing influences were unfavorable to it, Romanizing influences indifferent to it.

The reasons for this are numerous and most of them have been treated sufficiently by previous investigators, but in the writer's judgment certain other important influences have been either slighted or entirely ignored. We shall consider one or two.

[34] E.g., Lydia, Phrygia, The Thebaid.

The supremely important fact in early Christian history is the development of the concept of "The Church" as an independent, self-existing, metaphysical entity. This metaphysical entity was conceived as embodying itself in the whole body of believers; living, dead, and yet to be born. The entity was eternal, indestructable, and in its essence immutable. Although partially embodied in a visible society its essential being was conceived as independently sustained in the nature of the universe. It was an idea in the strict Platonic sense. No concept like this is found in the contemporary pagan cults. Even the Jewish concept of the 'chosen people' is ethnic or national rather than purely religious and it has no tinge of that metaphysical existence which is the most notable element in the Catholic concept of the Church. The elements out of which 'the Church' concept was constructed were four: two Roman, one Greek and one Hebrew. The Roman lawyers, in the process of fitting a municipal legal system to a world empire, evolved the twin legal entities, 'state' and 'sovereignty.' These entities were endowed with divers qualities; eternity, immutability, etc., but especially with the quality of having existential reality apart from any individual embodiment thereof. Greek philosophy contributed the idea of the Cosmopolis, the ideal world-city in which the fullest development of human personality was to be attained. This concept was as purely metaphysical as the self-existing, absolute 'state' of the Roman law, but unlike the Roman concept it had no concrete existence. The Jewish contribution was that of the 'chosen people,' 'the elect nation.' These four concepts were transferred from their original loci to the Christian society. The fact that all of these concepts were combined and centered on the same social group and the further fact that each of these concepts supplemented the others in a remarkable way resulted in the formation of one of the most powerful ideas in religious history.

This Church concept, thus built up, had already become widespread in the time of Augustine and this fact helps us to understand the otherwise unintelligible success of that saint in combatting Chiliasm. The real truth is seen to be that Augustine's ideas succeeded because they were not peculiarly his at all—they already existed, implicitly but really, in the mind of the generation which he addressed. The elements of the concept 'the Church' being what

they were, Augustine's explanation of, or rather abolition of, Chiliasm follows of inevitable logical and intellectual necessity. It was the genius of Augustine that he recognized and gave formulated, concrete expression to this accomplished fact and it is no derrogation of his genius to say that had he never existed the accomplished fact would eventually have been given expression to by some one else.

Another little considered element in Chiliasm is that of masochism, and sadism, the two being merely the opposite sides of the same psychical phenomenon. This element is found more or less prominently in all the Chiliastic literature from the early fragment of Papias to the elaborate discussions of Augustine. The masochistic phenomena are the most remarkable characteristics of the early martyrdoms and if a collection were made of the masochistic passages of the writings of the Chiliasts, the bulk of them would be as great as that of the Chiliastic passages proper.

It is necessary to bear in mind that masochism necessarily, in any advanced society, disguises itself under some socially acceptable form of sentiment or emotion, i.e., admiration for the constancy of the confessors or martyrs, suffering as a mark of the true Church, etc. It is always associated with the reality or idea of struggle. It has a high 'survival value' in the struggle for existence by heightening individual power in conflict. Like other human characteristics it is seen most clearly in the exaggerated form it assumes in its crowd manifestations. Its most evident expression is in the 'mob mind.' Our problem, then, is to discover how the declension of Chiliasm is to be explained by the transfer of the masochistic element in it to other vehicles of expression. The masochistic element was a vital factor in Chiliasm; without it almost the whole force of 'the thousand years reign of the saints' is lost. The explanation of the transfer is difficult. Undoubtedly some of the masochistic values of Chiliasm were taken over by the various, previously mentioned concepts that combined to make up the idea of the Catholic Church. 'Extra ecclesia nulla salus' accounts for part of the phenomena previously expressed Chiliastically. It is notable in this connection that there is no word of Chiliasm in Cyprian. But a more important transfer was that which took place in the course of the development of the doctrine of purgatory. It may perhaps seem incongruous to say that purgatory took over the values of the millennium and from

the point of view of formal theology it is so. But the only point we are trying to make here, namely, the fundamental fact of the expression of masochistic impulses, is as evidently shown in the purgatory as in the millennium concept. The desire for a heightened sense of self-realization, a richer content of experience, is the cause of the appearance of both concepts and they are closely allied psychologically. This fact comes out in the large part played by the Chiliasts in the evolution of the purgatory concept.[35] What we find here is a concurrent declension of Chiliasm and development of purgatory. For about two centuries the two concepts existed side by side; then the superior social value of purgatory asserting itself, that doctrine gradually took over the masochistic values of Chiliasm; the supersession of the later being rendered thereby more rapid and easy.

However it is probably that the transfer of the psychological values from Chiliasm was more to be ascribed to the rising asceticism of the early Church than to the concept of the Church as such, or even to the rise of the purgatory concept. Asceticism in some form is a permanent element in any wide spread religion and the values later expressed in Christian asceticism were in the earlier period mediated through Chiliasm. When St. Paul advocated abstinence from marriage 'because the time is short' he was not expressing asceticism. He was expressing a sensible idea based on belief in one of the chief Chiliastic doctrines, the immediate imminence of the Second Advent. In the case of such teachers as Tertullian the doctrine of marriage is the result of a combination of Chiliasm and asceticism. At a later date asceticism took over the doctrine of celibacy as meritorious on its own account but it never outgrew the original Chiliastic view that it was a logical preparation for the Second Advent. In other words restriction in matrimony whether Chilastic or monastic is due to the same inherent element in human nature, i.e., the masochistic. Similarly those good Phrygian Chiliasts who abandoned all their possessions and went out into the desert to meet the Lord were moved by the same psychological impulse that actuated the monks of the Thebaid. Historically the one set of concepts imperceptibly gave way to the other. Those same Thebaid monks are a good illustration of the fact. Some of them, at least in the earlier stages

[35] Clem. Alex. Paed., iii, Strom. VII. Origen, Hom. on Num., XXV. Hom. on Ps. XXVI. Lactantius, VII, 20.

of the movement, were influenced more by Chilastic concepts than by monastic ones. Many were influenced by both. Here again the superior value of the ascetic concepts for the ecclesiastical organization determined the eventual survival of the monastic institution. But whatever the conceptual images employed to give expression to the masochistic impulse, that impulse was psychologically the same. Organized monachism furnished a more convenient outlet for the stronger masochistic impulses than Chiliasm and so superseded it. The fact that monachism grew in proportion as Chiliasm declined is in this respect merely a case of trans-shipment. The vehicle was different but the goods carried were the same.

There are numerous other social and psychological, as well as economic causes for the declension of Chiliasm but they can perhaps be more conveniently considered in connection with the socialization of the early Church.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY CHURCH AND PROPERTY CONCEPTS

The Chiliasm of the early Christians had a direct bearing upon their attitude toward the property institutions and property concepts of the time. Neither the declension of Chiliasm nor the progressive socialization of the Church can be understood without some consideration of the attitude of the Christians toward property, and conversely the effect of the existing economic system upon the Christians.

The early Church made its appearance in a world where the institution of private property was supreme in fact and very largely unquestioned in theory. It is recognized with perfect clearness by all the ancient thinkers who refer to the subject that their civilization was based upon the property rights of man in man. It is not true that slavery was invariably considered part of the unalterable law of nature. Aristotle expressly states that a sufficient development of mechanistic technology would abrogate slavery. But such a technological development was not expected nor indeed wished for. Contempt for mechanical processes of industry was universal, with the dubious exception of the application of science to military engines. There is a similar unanimity in regard to commercial enterprise. Money obtained by ordinary mercantile methods was considered as dishonestly acquired. It was assumed as self-evident that the merchant had to be a thief. Interest on money was of course reprobated as contrary to nature.[1] Return from landed property was almost the only socially reputable form of income—with the exception of spoils of war. Free wage labor was so unimportant that the Roman law did not even develop a set of legal principles regarding it.

The Jewish property system, which originally had some notable peculiarities of its own, had by the first century A.D. become of necessity so like the Roman that the differences may for our purposes be disregarded. The more so as Christianity very early came almost exclusively under the influence of the Roman institutions and concepts in this regard. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that Roman

[1] Cf. Plato, Laws, V, 742. Aristotle, Politics, 1:X, XI. Cicero, De Officus, II, XXV. Seneca, De Beneficus, VII, X.

practice in regard to property was widely at variance with Roman theory, with the result that serious moral disintegration came over persons engaging in commercial enterprises. The moral lapses of the early Christians are largely to be set down to this cause, on the principle that a destruction of moral integrity in one respect makes other delinquencies easy.

With respect to the attitude of Christ towards contemporary property institutions, it is unnecessary for our purpose to regard any conclusions of modern criticism. The synoptic gospels were uncritically accepted by the early Church and we are concerned merely with what was commonly accepted as the teaching of Christ.

Perhaps as convenient a way as any of illustrating the breadth of view in Christ's attitude toward property institutions would be to take a single illustration and apply to it the whole range of property concepts found in the teachings of Christ. No single illustration is so applied in the Gospels as we have them, but the principles will be the clearer for the consistent use of the same illustration. We shall take as our type case one which Christ himself used; the case of a thief who steals a coat. The teachings of Christ about property can conveniently be put down under four heads, each illustrating, by a different way of treating the thief, a different property concept.

First: The ordinary or conventional manner of treating the thief, based on the concept of the morality and sacredness of private property; i.e., catching the thief, recovering the stolen property and punishing the crime by fine or imprisonment or torture. This conventional standard of morality and attitude towards property is illustrated, e.g., in the story of the man with one talent in the parable. It is very concisely summed up in the expression: "To him that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

Second: What may be called for convenience the socialistic manner of treating the thief—no implications either good or bad being intended by the use of the term socialistic. This treatment would consist of catching the thief, recovering the stolen property but letting the thief go free with merely an admonition to future good behavior. This treatment is based on the concept that the institution of private property has only a partial validity and that violations of private property rights are to be blamed not alone upon the violator but

upon society at large in equal degree. This attitude is illustrated in the case of the woman taken in adultery: "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." The illustration is perhaps more apt than appears at first glance for female chastity is and was legally possessed of tangible economic value i.e., adultery was viewed as a violation of a property right belonging to the husband of the adultress.

Third: What may be termed the anarchistic manner of treating the thief—here again no implications either good or bad are intended by the employment of the term anarchistic. This treatment consists essentially in pacificism, in Tolstoi's non-resistance. It is purely negative and allows the thief to get away with the stolen coat without anyone making any move to recover the property. This treatment is based on the concept that private property institutions have no validity at all, but that the only valid property arrangement is that of pure communism. This attitude toward property is illustrated by such sayings of Christ as "Of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again;" "Resist not him that is evil," etc.

Fourth: What may be distinguished as the specifically Christain manner of treating the thief—using the word Christian as appertaining strictly to the founder of the Church. This treatment consists of running after the thief not for the purpose of capturing and punishing him; not even for the purpose of recovering the stolen coat but for the pupose of giving him a vest and an overcoat in addition to what he has stolen. It amounts to the direct encouragement and reward of the thief for doing what is presumably a meritorious action by stealing. This way of treating a thief is not socialistic, or communistic; it is not even anarchistic. It is something as far beyond anarchy, as anarchy is beyond socialism, or socialism beyond ordinary conventional individualism. It is specifically and peculiarly and uniquely Christian, using that word as above defined. This treatment is not based on any concept of any kind of property institution. Its logical, intellectual position is the denial of the validity or worth of any property institutions, private or communistic. It involves indeed the destruction of the very concept property as implying possession by right of social agreement. This attitude of Christ toward property finds expression in such sayings as: "From him that taketh away thy cloke withhold not thy coat also." "Blessed are ye poor." "Woe unto you that are rich." It is easier for a camel to go through the

eye of a needle, etc. etc. The great bulk of Christ's statements about property are to be classified under this fourth head. The views are probably connected, with just what degree of closeness it is impossible to say, to the belief in the immediately imminent catastrophe of the world. With somewhat less certainty, it may be ventured that certain of Christ's sayings which we have listed as anarchistic are perhaps influenced by the same idea.

It is of course obvious that the above four fold division is not exact in the strict scientific sense, or that any teaching of Christ concerning property can be unhesitatingly classified under one head or another. Still less is anything intended to be implied as to the existence or non-existence of any underlying, universal, theological principle which would reconcile apparent divergencies. Theological metaphysics as such, lie outside the scope of this chapter which is intended as an objective study of concepts of property. From an objective point of view it is evident that the four divisions imperceptibly shade into one another and form a continuous series, nevertheless for the sake of convenience it may be considered as approximating a rational organization of the material under distinct heads.

Immediately after the time of Christ the Christians in Jerusalem developed a communistic organization. "All that believed were together and had all things in common and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need." "Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."[2]

It is doubtless true that the participants in this communistic society believed themselves to be living according to the principles and precepts of Christ. Yet there is some evidence which would lead to the conclusion that perhaps this experiment was less a deliberate and reasoned out endeavor to organize a permanent society on a new economic basis, than an instinctive movement, entered upon under the influence of a belief in the immediately imminent second advent

[2] Acts IV.

of Christ and therefore expected to be of only very limited duration. The collections subsequently taken up in other Christian communities 'for the relief of the poor saints in Jerusalem' would seem to lend color to this view of the matter.

In St. Paul's teaching about property there is a fundamental inconsistency. He makes statements which taken separately are applicable to particular situations but which are not in harmony with one another. He loyally supported the established right of private property, even in slaves. But at another time he pronounced that property right depended upon service rendered. In one place we have: "Slaves obey your masters" in another: "If any will not work neither let him eat." But if a man's slaves obey him he can eat without working. There is no suggestion of communism in St. Paul's writings. If all the 'property passages' in the epistles are collected and read in connection with their contexts two facts come into prominence, First: Property institutions as such have only a relative validity. They are not viewed as ends valuable in themselves but are subordinated to religious ends, and the concept of an immediately imminent second advent lies at the base of this relative valuation.[3] Second: Economic arrangements of the existing social order, like similar political arrangements, are to be strictly conformed to, in spite of their merely relative validity, for fear of jeopardizing the more important religious movement.[4] St. Paul whether consciously or not, is, in regard to social institutions, an evolutionary revolutionist. He would doubtless have been the first to admit that his doctrine of human brotherhood, for example, would eventually overthrow his doctrine of slavery, supposing—as there is no ground for thinking he did suppose—that time enough elapsed for his doctrine of brotherhood to permeate the general social consciousness. In so far as property concepts are concerned it would probably be difficult to maintain that there is any essential divergence between the teachings of St. Paul and some at least of the teachings of Christ. St. Paul was by nature an ecclesiastical statesman. He seems to have taken such of Christ's property concepts as served his purposes and ignored the others.

[3] I. Cor. vii 30.

[4] Rom. xiii 3.

In the epistle of St. James are to be found very bitter complaints as to the working of property institutions. These complaints are so serious as to suggest the inevitable attempt to make over the institutions and the fact that no such attempt is indicated is due to the manifestly lively expectation of the second advent. Yet even so it was necessary for the writer to council patience to his brethren.[5]

In the Revelation there is a passage, xviii, 12 seq., quite in the manner of the most violent of the ancient prophets or the modern anarchists. In this passage property is conceived as evil and the destruction of civilization as it then was, is conceived as a cause of rejoicing to saints, apostles, and prophets. On the other hand the New Jerusalem in the same book[6] is a 'wholesale jewelers paradise' and involves the property concepts of those cities of Asia Minor who did most of the jewelry manufacturing of the Roman Empire. It is very doubtful how far anything in such a description can be said to embody property concepts but the ideal put forth is the communistic enjoyment of incredible luxury.

The epistle of Clement of Rome has only incidental references to property. They can be well summed up in the quotation:[7] "Let the rich man provide for the wants of the poor; and let the poor man bless God, because He hath given him one by whom his need may be supplied." There is manifestly no question of tampering with received property institutions and concepts on the part of the writer of such a sentence. It is equally evident that such an attitude in regard to property is eminently well calculated to enable the holder to propagate specifically theological opinions with a minimum of interested opposition.

The Didache holds a naïve and touching communistic creed.[8] "Thou shalt not turn away from him that hath need but shalt share all things with thy brother and shalt not say that they are thine own." This passage, the only one on the subject in the Didache, would seem to indicate that the institution of private property existed as a matter of fact in the writer's community, but that the

[5] Jas. Chap. V.
[6] Chaps. 21-22.
[7] Chap. xxxviii.
[8] Did. IV. 8.

validity of it was not acknowledged. The position may perhaps be called one of conceptual and constructive communism.

The Epistle of Barnabas holds exactly the same view in almost exactly the same words:[9] "Thou shalt communicate to thy neighbor all that thou hast, thou shalt not call anything thine own."

Early in the second century we come upon the Ebionites who in the matter of property held very strong views.[10] The stricter of them made poverty a condition of salvation. They refused to acknowledge the validity of the concept property—that is in theory. In practice some of them seem to have been influenced by the doctrine and practice of the Essenes in regard to communism.

All through the second century we find a continuous succession of heretical sects, Gnostics and others, who held either the doctrine of the wickedness of property-ownership as such, 'holy poverty,' or else objected to individual ownership of property and preached or practiced communism in such degree as might be possible under the circumstances. Of these sects it is sufficient to name the Marcionites 110 A.D. The Carpocratians 135 A.D. The Procidians 160 A.D.(?) The Basilidians 138 A.D. It is evident that there was in progress in the second century an ascetic movement which later took on the forms of Manichaeism and Christian asceticism. The Church consistently opposed all these sects and maintained the validity of private property without condemning communism as such, except in extreme cases, such as that of Epiphanes of Alexandria, a Carpocriation, who in a book on Justice, 125 A.D., defined virtue as consisting in absolute communism of goods and women.

To return to orthodox Christianity, Hermas shows very clearly the inconsistencies which beset Christian theory and practice in the first half of the second century. All who are rich must be deprived of their wealth in order to be good Christians.[11] Yet this deprivation of wealth must be only relative; there must be wealth enough left for the giving of alms.[12] There is no trace of communism in Hermas and no praise of poverty as such. The chief justification for the existence of property institutions would seem to be that they are

[9] Barn. XIV. 16.
[10] Schaff, Vol. 1.
[11] Past. V. vi. 6.
[12] Past. S. IX. XXX. 5.

social structures which can be utilized for the giving and receiving of alms. Perhaps one paragraph is worth quoting as giving possibly the earliest formulation extant of the property concepts that finally became dominant. "The rich man has much wealth but is poor in matters relating to the Lord because he is distracted about his riches and he offers very few confessions and intercessions to the Lord and those which he does offer are small and weak, and have no power above. But when the rich man refreshes the poor and assists him in his necessities, believing that which he does to the poor man will be able to find its reward with God—because the poor man is rich in intercessions and confession and his intercession has great power with God—then the rich man helps the poor in all things without hesitation; and the poor man, being helped by the rich, intercedes for him, giving thanks to God for him who bestows gifts upon him. And he still continues earnestly to interest himself for the poor man, that his want may be constantly supplied. For he knows that the intercession of the poor man is acceptable and influential with God. Both accordingly accomplish their work. The poor man makes intercession; a work in which he is rich, which he received from the Lord, and with which he recompenses the master who helps him. And the rich man in like manner, unhesitatingly bestows upon the poor man the riches which he received from the Lord. And this is a great work and acceptable before God, because he understands the object of his wealth and has given to the poor of the gifts of the Lord and rightly discharged his service to Him.[13]

The inconsistent and irreconciliable nature of the evidence about early Christian property institutions is well illustrated in Justin Martyr. Two short extracts are sufficient for the purpose. "We who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions, now bring what we have into a common stock and communicate to every one in need."[14] "We carry on us all we possess and share everything with the poor."[15]

The second of these passages would indicate that the first is not to be taken in a too literal and comprehensive sense. It may perhaps be ventured as an opinion that the truth of the matter, as regards the

[13] Past III. 2.
[14] Apol. I. IV.
[15] Apol. I. xiv.

Christians of whom Justin wrote, is that the concept of private property was largely invalidated and that personal possessions were thought of as owned in common while the 'common stock' consisted in reality of contributions—it may be large contributions—given for the relief of necessity among the members.

The account preserved to us in Lucian of the Christian communities of Judea in the later half of the second Century would seem to bear out this opinion. Lucian says: "The activity of these people in dealing with any matter that affects their community is something extraordinary. They spare no trouble, no expense. Peregrine all this time was making quite an income on the strength of his bondage. Money came pouring in. You see these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self devotion which are so common among them and then it was impressed upon them by their original law giver that they are all brothers from the moment that they are converted and deny the gods of Greece and worship the crucified sage and live after his laws. All this they take quite on trust with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property."[16]

In Tertullian we find the same contradiction as regards private ownership and communism which has already been noted in Justin. The contradiction is more glaring, but possibly the explanation of the real situation is similar. The following two extracts from the same chapter bring this contradiction out in high relief: "Family possessions which generally destroy brotherhood among you, create fraternal bonds among us. One in mind and soul, we do not hesitate to share our earthly goods with one another. All things are common among us but our wives." "On the monthly collection day, if he likes, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure and only if he be able, for there is no compulsion, all is voluntary."[17]

Tertullian was a Montanist and one of the most serious charges made against the Montanists was that some of their prophets received interest on money loaned by them.[18] Tertullian is above suspicion in this respect. He demonstrates by quotations from both the Old

[16] De Mort. Per. XIV.
[17] Apol. XXXIX.
[18] Eus., E. H., V. 18.

and New Testaments that it is absolutely contradictory to Christianity. Interest on money is the only property institution in regard to which the teaching of the early Church is consistent. Every reference we have in regard to this practice condemns it—not mildly as a venial offense—but fiercely and savagely as a heinous crime like incest or murder. "Fenerare est hominem occidere" is a favorite formula. In this respect the most pronounced apologists of private wealth like Clement of Alexandria are in perfect accord with the most pronounced communists like Tertullian. The only difference to be noted is one of emphasis. In the earlier writers there are relatively few references to interest, which may perhpas be due to the fact that in the earlier time there were relatively few Christians possessed of surplus means requiring investment. As might naturally be expected, the writers of the period after the establishment of Christianity as a legal religion make more frequent and more bitter reference to the matter. The vehemence of denunciation indulged in by these later writers almost exceeds credibility. The most improbable and strained exegesis is resorted to in an effort to explain away the words of Christ in the parables of the pounds and talents. But this vehemence is by no means confined to the Nicene and post-Nicene fathers. So statesmanlike a bishop as Cyprian, in a long railing accusation against certain opposition bishops brings forth as their final sin that they had "multiplied gain by usury."[19] Usury is not to be taken, of course, in its present sense of excessive or burdensome interest and it is evident that Cyprian did not use it in such a sense. He is simply condeming interest as such. In the minds of the early Christians the difference between taking five percent interest or fifty percent was exactly the same as the difference between stealing one dollar or ten. The sin was essentially the same irrespective of the particular amount involved. Indeed this comparison is scarcely a valid one; for taking interest was conceived as a much worse sin than plain robbery. It is perhaps worth noting that the moral distinction between interest and usury is of very late development. The credit, if it be such, of making it, is to be ascribed to Calvin and is not unconnected with the prediliction of certain types of pecuniary interest for that reformer's system of eccliastical polity. The Roman law did indeed fix a maximum legal rate of interest, varying at different times and even

[19] De Lapsis, VI.

at the same time for different forms of commercial risk. During the first three centuries A.D. it was, for example, consistently twelve percent on ships and varied from six to twelve percent on other forms of investment. But this has little moral connotation.

Early Christian condemnation of interest on loans was by no means confined to the expression of opinion by church writers. Council after council legislated against it with ever increasing severity. The forty-fourth Apostolic Canon prohibited the practice to clerics. The Council of Elvira 310 A.D. forbade it to both clerics and laity. The Council of Arles 314 A.D. provided that clerics guilty of the practice should be deposed from the ministry. The seventeenth canon of the Council of Nicea 325 A.D. provided that they should be excommunicated. The penalty is reiterated in the twelfth canon of the First Council of Carthage 345 A.D. There is no need to continue the list. It is sufficient to say that nearly every council whose canons have come down to us has legislation against interest. Again and again it is absolutely forbidden to clergy and laity alike under the severest ecclesiastical penalties—and it is necessary to remember that after 325 A.D. these penalties could, if need be, be enforced by governmental authority.

This attitude of the early Church toward interest on loans is a matter of very considerable historical importance. Although, as we shall endeavor to show later, the ecclesiastical laws were frequently and largely evaded, they still had such influence that their contribution to the sum of economic forces which accomplished the overthrow of ancient civilization is by no means an insignificant one. Nor did the influence of this attitude cease at the fall of Rome. It rather increased thereafter and for several centuries, the so-called "Dark Ages," civilization was strangled by the power of this idea of the sin of usury. To this day the Roman Church regards interest on money as a reprehensible thing which, however, is not, for practical reasons, to be spoken of as sinful by the clergy.[20] This attitude has been no inconsiderable factor in the relatively late industrial development in Catholic countries.

The early Christian concept of interest was not an idea original with Christianity. It was not derived from Christ at all. It was taken over bodily from Old Testament Judaism and contemporary

[20] See Pronouncement of the Sacred Penitentiary, 11 Feb., 1832.

pagan philosophy. It is a well known fact that the views of Plato and Aristotle, of Cicero and Seneca on interest, correspond in a very astonishing way to the views of Deuteronomy and Isaiah, of the Psalms and Ezekiel. The strength of the concept in the early Church was due to this fact. In regard to no other concept was there such a unanimity of opinion. The Christian convert found that the sacred scriptures of his new faith confirmed in the strongest language the condemnation of interest which he had become familiar with from the writings of the noblest pagan philosophers. When reason and religion were in accord it is not wonderful that their judgment was accepted—as a theory.

In spite of this union of pagan philosophers and Hebrew prophets, of Christian Fathers and Ecclesiastical Canons, the condemnation and prohibition of interest on money was a theory only. A very ordinary knowledge of classical civilization is sufficient to explain the reason of this. More nearly than ony other institution, the financial machinery of antiquity corresponds to that of modern life. Trusts and millionaires were phenomena of their economic life as of ours. Banks were numerous and ubiquitous. They were of all sizes and degrees; from the great metropolitan corporation with correspondents all over the civilized world, to the hated money lender in a shabby office on a side street. The great bankers were men of the first importance in society. From their number were regularly recruited the officials of the imperial treasury. They were almost without exception men of the strictest financial integrity. The Roman banking laws protected the depositor more securely than the laws of any modern nation, and these Roman laws were rigidly enforced. Every banking institution had to obtain government authorization in order to do business and this authorization was withdrawn on the discovery of the smallest discrepancy in the accounts. The regular rate of interest on ordinary deposits was four percent; under certain peculiar conditions the rate went as low as two and a half and as high as six percent. The rate published by a bank had to be paid even though payment swept away the banker's entire private property. The banker lost everything before the depositor lost anything. The banks were used by the government in carrying out such fiscal measures as could not be conveniently handled by the treasury department directly. They played a still more important part in the

ordinary commercial life of the times. A relatively small volume of business was, or could be, carried on by transfers of specie. The great bulk of commercial transactions were of necessity carried on by checks, drafts, discounts, bills of exchange and similar instruments of credit. It was a matter of simple impossibility for any man in ordinary commercial or industrial life to carry on his business for even a single day without participating directly or indirectly in transactions involving loans and interest.

Our excuse for reciting these commonplace details of Roman commercial life is that their very commonplaceness explains the discrepancy between early Christian theory and practice in the matter of interest. It would be an easy task to convict the early Christians of hypocritical pretense in this regard. Nothing more would be necessary than to print their theory in one column and their practice in a parallel one. Yet the early Christians were not hypocrites. As regards sincerity of profession they compare very favorably with any religionists of any age. As a matter of fact the historians have long ago shown that it is altogether impossible and unjust to argue from a sect's opinions to their feelings and actions. To quote Macauley[21] "Only imagine a man acting for one single day on the supposition that all his neighbors believe all that they profess or act up to all thay they believe. Imagine a man acting on the supposition that he may safely offer the deadliest injuries and insults to everybody who says that revenge is sinful; or that he may safely intrust all his property without security to any person who says it is wrong to steal. Such a character would be too absurd for the wildest farce." "The law which is inscribed on the walls of the synagogues prohibits covetousness. But if we were to say that a Jew mortgagee would not foreclose because God had commanded him not to covet his neighbor's house, everybody would think us out of our wits."[22] Yet that Jew is no hypocrite in his religion. He is sincerely and honestly devoted to his faith and will sacrifice time and money; will undergo social obloquy and contempt in support of it. So it was with the early Christians. By the process of abstracting their theory and practice of interest from the social matrix which alone makes the theory or practice intelligible,

[21] Sir James Macintosh.
[22] Civil Disabilities of the Jews.

it is easy to show a logical inconsistency. It would be equally foolish and false to deduce from this inconsistency any conclusions one way or the other as to early Christian morality. It is if course no aim of this thesis to attack or defend any religious or moral opinions. It is a matter entirely apart from our present concern to evaluate interest or non-interest in ethical terms. Our purpose is not to explain away the inconsistency of the early Christians. Admitting the inconsistency in the fullest degree, our aim is to explain it as natural, and, under the social conditions then prevailing, practically inevitable. The early Christians left funds to care in perpetuity for the family burial lot.[23] Under any religious creed; Pagan, Jewish, or Christian, decent provision for the care of graves of relatives was not only admissible, it was a positive demand of social reputability; to say nothing of the demand of natural affection.

Similarly annual agapes were established by bequests as a charity to the poor brethren.[24] These agapes were no innovation. As an institution they were perfectly familar and in universal observance among the pagans. The agapes were simply ordinary Roman silicernia with the name changed. To the Romans, founding a silicernium was like wearing a toga or going to a bath. It possessed the sanction of law and the benediction of religion; but its real compulsion lay in social custom. No person could escape this pressure of the mores and retain self respect, to say nothing of the respect of others. The pagan silicernium was morally respectable; it perpetuated friendship and promoted good feeling. There was no reason for avoiding it, if avoidance had been possible—as it was not. The Christians not only preserved this pious institution; they improved it. Their annual agapes fed the poor, which the silicernia, excellent as they were, seldom did.

The explanation we have endeavored to give of the endowment of family burial lots and annual agapes is applicable, mutis mutandis, to other cases of interest. It therefore is not surprising to learn that Callixtus (pope 218–223 A.D.) was a banker previous to his elevation to the papacy; that large numbers of Christians, particularly widows

[23] Lourie, Monuments of the Early Church, Chap. II.

[24] Lourie, *ibid.*

and orphans—entrusted their money to his bank, and that he had large loans out at good interest to Jewish bankers.[25]

The truth is that the early Christian horror of interest, while absolutely honest and even desperately sincere, was a strictly legalistic, ceremonial, and ritualistic horror. It was purely formal and was not at all concerned with any economic principle. The thing that was wicked, was not income from capital invested, but income *in the form of interest on money*. To own a ship and sail it and make profits from ownership by freight charges was perfectly honest, but to invest money in a shipping corporation and receive dividends was wicked. So it was honest to own a building and get money as rent. It was immoral to invest money in the consrtuction company that erected that building and receive income in the form of interest. Rent, profit, and interest are merely three forms of the same thing, income from invested capital. Any endeavor to distinguish between them in this respect is entirely devoid of moral or economic justification. The ancient Church fathers were as well aware of this as we are. The real point and importance of their concept of interest was their defense of that concept. That defense was a curious one and illustrates the difference between ancient and modern reasoning on economic and matters—and on other matters also. The difference in a word is that of mistaking means for ends on the theory of course that we moderns are right and the prophets, philosophers, Christian fathers, et al. wrong. According to modern social science, interest is merely a means adopted for the attainment of certain ends—economic, educational, religious or whatever. The goodness or badness of interest is to be judged strictly and solely by the convenience and economy with which it serves these ends. If any other property institution can, in a given situation, serve a given end more easily and more cheaply than the institution of interest, then, in that situation, the institution of interest—other things being equal—is immoral and should be abolished. If, in the given situation, no other property institution can serve the given end more easily and more cheaply than the institution of interest, then that institution is moral and should be retained. That is, from the modern sociological point of view, the institution of interest is inconceivable except as a means to some end outside itself. As a means it is to be judged in a

[25] Cf. Hypolytus.

purely objective and pragmatic manner by the ordinary standards of cost price, economic, social, and other.

The method of the ancients is entirely otherwise. Assuming still the correctness of the modern viewpoint, which viewpoint be it said is not unassailable and indeed is assailed by divers radicals, socialists and others, but for the most part persons lacking in pecuniary reputability; the mistake then, that the Early Church fathers make is that of taking the means for an end. They have many arguments against interest but all these arguments can be criticised for this one error. The fathers elevate interest to the dignity of an end in itself. Interest, qua interest, is condemned. It is taking advantage of a brother's necessity. It is grinding the face of the poor. It is producing pride, luxury, and vice. As soon as moral value is attached to anything, it of course, is viewed as an end in itself. If it be true that interest is an end in itself, then the fiercest diatribes of the fathers are none too severe. Assuming their premises, their conclusions follow inevitably. The modern man—he is not unknown—who talks about the "sacred rights" of private property is guilty of the same error as the ancient Christians, the error of mistaking means for ends. The early Christians could not see that the property institution of interest is neither good nor bad except as it is good or bad *for something*. The *something* determines the judgment. As a matter of historical fact the condemnation of interest developed in certain early stages of human civilization and at those stages interest was socially detrimental. At those stages, however, it was exceedingly rare and correspondingly infamous. In any country where there is abundance of good, free land the phenomenon of interest on money will disappear, provided labor is free. So it disappeared in the northern states of this Union in the later part of the 18th century. These phenomena caused the southerners to adopt slavery though all their English traditions had declared it immoral for more than three centuries. The relation of interest to slavery under a condition of free land is the relation of cause and effect, i.e., the requirement of interest will produce slavery and the abolition of interest will abolish slavery.[26] These social phenomena are of importance in our consideration of the early Christian doctrine of interest. That doctrine was largely evaded and disobeyed but it still had great effect

[26] A. Loria. Cf. Economic Basis of Society. (Int.)

and that effect was toward the abolition of slavery. We do not mean that this economic doctrine alone resulted in the abolition of slavery, or even that it was a chief cause in the abolition of slavery, it was not obeyed well enough to be such a chief cause; but so far as it was obeyed, it tended in that direction.

The net result of all Christian teaching together was to prolong the existence of the institution of slavery for two centuries, perhaps for three. The doctrine of the sinfulness of interest however, worked toward emancipation and forced slavery in its later end to become almost wholly agricultural, i.e., to yield income as rent. Slaves cannot be employed in commerce or industry in sufficient numbers to be profitable where the institution of interest is banned as it was in the 'dark ages.' The Christian concept of interest undermined ancient civilization by abrogating, slowly but surely, the institution of property by which such gangs of 'manufacturing slaves' as made the fortune of Crassus, could alone be made profitable. It is an historical curiosity that it accomplished this result without any attack on the institution of slavery itself.

As soon as Christain doctrines became widespread enough to produce important social results we find Christian slave owners manumitting their slaves in considerable numbers. It is no derogation to the influence of the doctrine of human brotherhood or to the humanity of the Christian slave owners to mention the fact that the doctrine of the sinfulness of interest, by tending to make slavery unprofitable, aided in the process of bringing to light the real content of the doctrine of human brotherhood, and of making the humane practice of manumission easier by the removal of certain economic impediments.

In order to understand properly the working of the prohibition of interest and its relation to manumission, it is necessary to carry the analysis one step farther to its ultimate physical basis, which was the conditioning factor of actual practice and eventually of theory also. The exhaustion of the soil of western Europe which was the result of ancient methods of agriculture, together with the rising standard of living and the competition of other more fertile agricultural regions like Egypt and North Africa resulted in the substitution of the latifundi for small landholdings.[27] As the pressure continued

[27] Cf. A. Loria, Economic Foundations of Society. (Int.)

the latifundi in turn became economically unprofitable under forced labor (slavery) and large tracts of land were abandoned. In order to put this land under agriculture again the charge upon it had to be reduced by the substitution of (relatively) free associated labor, villange or serfdom. But this change cut off the economic margin upon which the structure of ancient civilization was built and is the ultimate economic reason assignable for the fall of Rome. Of course the collapse of the empire could, theoretically, have been avoided had the Romans of the first three centuries A.D. been content to live the toilsome and frugal life of the Romans of the early republic. But this was an utter impossibility in practice. This slowly working and hardly understood decline in the relative and actual ability of ancient agriculture to sustain the weight imposed upon it, enables us to see why the sinfulness of interest could be steadily indoctrined even though steadily evaded, by Christians from the beginning, while manumission was not taught at all in the beginning and only worked up to the dignity of a pious action relatively late.[28] It also explains why manumission of household and personal slaves preceded that of agricultural slaves. Of course there is nothing peculiarly Christian about this later phenomenon and the operation of other causes is discernable, but it is important for our purpose to observe that Christian practice, and Christian theory in property matters in the long run, followed the broad lines of the underlying economic evolution.[29] The application of this to the origin of Christian monasticism and to the revival of communistic theories by the later Church fathers lies at the very outside limit of our study but will be briefly touched on after we have considered the final overthrow of the communistic property concept as they appear in the earlier fathers up to and including Tertullian.

Clement of Alexandria 153–217 A.D. has the distinction of being the first Christian theological writer who clearly expounds the concept of private property which has held sway without substantial change in the Church until the present time. This statement does not apply to the doctrine of receiving interest on money. In respect to this doctrine Clement is in perfect accord with all other early Chris-

[28] Circa 200 (?).

[29] Cf. K. Marx, Das Kapital, Vol. 1.

tians both before and after himself. Indeed he specifically states that the Mosaic prohibition against taking interest from one's brother extends in the case of a Christian to all mankind. But in regard to all other property institutions Clement's attitude is essentially that of any modern Christian of generous disposition.

In all that Clement has to say about property, and the 'bulk' of his 'property passages' is as great as that of all previous Christian writers together, he speaks like a man on the defensive. Indeed there has come down to us no other Christian writing earlier than his time which presents his view, with the dubious exception of some passages in Hermas. The fact seems to be that while Clement is undoubtedly presenting an apologetic for the existing practice in the Church of his day, that practice was felt to be more or less open to attack in the light of certain scripture passages. Communism as an existential reality was gone by the time of Clement—whatever may have been the extent—probably a limited one—to which it had existed in the earlier ages. But while communism as a fact was dead, communism as an idea or ideal of Christian economy was not dead. Indeed Clement's views about the morality of wealth were so different from those of previous writers that a great modern economist[30] in treating of this subject ventures the opinion, though doubtfully, that the reason why Clement, alone among the great early theologians, was never canonized by the Church was that he ran counter to popular belief on this subject. This opinion is probably erroneous. Clement's theological opinions have a semi-Gnostic tinge quite sufficient to explain the absence of his name from the calendar of saints.

Clement justifies the institution of private property. He justifies, on the highest ethical and philosophical principles, the possession by Christians of even the most enormous wealth. His apologetic is not an original one. He borrows it bodily from Plato. Indeed he quotes Plato verbatim, invocation to Pan and the other heathen gods included.[31] The originality lies in applying this Platonic doctrine to the exposition of Christian scripture. Clement's method is strictly that of Bibical exegesis. In the well known sermon or essay on: "Who is the Rich Man that shall be saved" he takes up practically all of the scriptural passages which seem opposed to the institutions

[30] F. Nitti in Catholic Socialism.

[31] Phaedus, The Laws, in Strom. II, 6.

of private property and explains them in so modern a spirit that the whole sermon might be delivered today in any ordinary Church and would be readily accepted as sound and reliable doctrine. His thesis is that wealth or poverty are matters in themselves indifferent. That riches are not to be bodily gotten rid of, but are to be wisely conserved and treated as a stewardship intrusted to the owner by God. That charity to the poor should be in proportion to one's wealth and that a right use of wealth will secure salvation to the upright Christian even though he possesses great riches all his life and leaves them to his heirs. The wealth that is dangerous to the soul is not pyhsical possessions, but spiritual qualities of greed and avarice.

His views can be best expressed by himself. We give two characteristic passages from the sermon above referred to.[32] "Rich men that shall with difficulty enter into the kingdom," is to be apprehended in a scholarly way, not awkwardly, or rustically, or carnally. For if the expression is used thus, salvation does not depend upon external things, whether they be many or few, small or great, or illustrious or obscure or esteemed or disesteemed; but on the virtue of the soul, on faith and hope and love and brotherliness, and knowledge, and meekness and humility and truth the reward of which is salvation." "Sell thy possessions." What is this? He does not, as some off hand conceive, bid him throw away the substance he possesses and abandon his property; but he bids him banish from his soul his notions about wealth, his excitement and morbid feeling about it, the anxieties, which are the thorns of existence which choke the seed of life. And what peculiar thing is it that the new creature, the Son of God intimates and teaches? It is not the outward act which others have done, but something else indicated by it, greater, more godlike, more perfect, the stripping off of the passions from the soul itself and from the disposition, and the cutting up by the roots and casting out of what is alien to the mind." "One, after ridding himself of the burden of wealth, may none the less have still the lust and desire for money innate and living; and may have abandoned the use of it, but being at once destitute of and desiring what he spent may doubly grieve both on account of the absence of attendance and the presence of regret."[33]

[32] Chap. XIV.
[33] Chap. XXXI.

We have now come to the beginning of what is in many respects the most interesting period in the history of property concepts. It is a period in which everything is upside down and wrong end to. In that strange age we find a famous archbishop, one of the world's noblest orators, a man of the most spotless integrity and the most saintly life, publicly preaching in the foremost pulpit of Christendom doctrines of property, the implications of which, the most hardened criminal would scarcely venture to breathe to a gang of thieves.[34] We find the most learned scholar of the century, in the weightiest expositions of Christian Scripture, penning the most powerful apologetic of anarchy that is to be found in the literature of the world.[35] We find one of the greatest of the popes, a man whose genius as a statesman will go down to the latest ages of history, setting forth in a manual for the instruction of Christian bishops, property concepts more radical than those of the fiercest Jacobins in the bloodiest period of the Terror.[36]

Stranger still, these incredible performances are the strongest proofs of the wisdom and piety of the men responsible for them. These men are today honored as the saviors of civilized religion and their images in bronze and marble and painted glass adorn the proudest temples of the most conservative denominations of Christians. The strange history of these famous men: Athanasius, the two Gregories, Basil and Chrysostom in the East; Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome and Gregory in the West, lies outside the limits of our study. But the explanation of their desperate and uncompromising communism can be given in a word. It was the communism of crisis: the communism of shipwrecked sailors forced to trust their lives to a frail lifeboat with an insufficient supply of provisions. These great Christian scholars, enriched by all the accumulated culture of their civilization, saw that culture falling into ruin all around them; they felt the foundations of that civilization trembling beneath their feet. To vary the figure, they beheld the rising tide of ignorance and barbarism rapidly engulfing the world and with desperate haste they set to work rebuilding and strengthening the ark of the Church that in it, religion, and so much of civilization as possible, might be saved

[34] Chrysostom, Sermons Rich Man and Lazarus, etc.
[35] Jerome, Commentaries.
[36] Gregory, Pastoralis Cura.

till the flood subsided. Their task, perhaps the most important and most urgent, that men have ever had to perform, was of such a nature that they cared not what they wrecked in order to accomplish it. They ripped up the floor of the bridal chamber for timber and took the doors of the bank-safe for iron.

These rhetorical figures are violent; but they are less violent than the reality they are intended to express. Monasticism was the last desperate hope of civilized Christianity and these men knew it. To establish monasticism they degraded the sanctity of marriage and denounced the sacredness of property. They conferred the most sacred honors upon the lowliest drugery;[37] they turned princes into plowmen and nobles into breakers of the soil. Some historians, judging them by the different standards of a later age, have pronounced them fanatics led astray by vulgar superstition. But judged by the needs of their own age, judged by the inestimable services rendered to the world by the monastic system they instituted, they are entitled to a place far up in the list of the wisest and the ablest of the human kind.

Sketchy and imperfect as the above study necessarily is, it nevertheless gives the primary facts which are essential to an understanding of the important part played by property concepts and property institutions in the transformation of early Christianity from a predominantly eschatological to a practically socialized movement.

We have seen,[38] that the earliest generations of Christians took over from contemporary Judaism a strongly Chiliastic eschatology. The logical consequence of such an eschatology is an indifference to, or undervaluation of, the existing social arrangements including the property concepts and institutions. One form easily taken by this indifference and undervaluation is that of practical communism. We accordingly find in the Acts and in such early writings as the Didache and the Epistle of Barnabas a distinctly communistic theory and the traces of more or less effort to put this theory into some degree of practical effect. Chiliasm and communism in these writers go together naturally.

Pari passu with this logical, communistic Chiliasm we can trace the development of an illogical, individualistic Chiliasm in St. Paul, Clement of Rome and Hermas. It is already manifest even at this

[37] Laborare est orare.

[38] Chap. I.

early stage, that the weight of influence and power of control in the Christian societies is on the side of the individualists. This is due to two causes. In the first place the communists among the Christians worked under a great handicap. The underlying economic institutions of society can indeed be changed. But they can be changed —or any considerable scale—only very slowly and by enormous effort. At any attempt to change them a thousand interested and determined antagonists at once arise. It is not too much to say that had all Christians insisted upon communism as an essential element of the Christian faith and practice, Christianity in the Roman world could never have developed into anything more than an unimportant sect. The very fact that Christianity spread as rapidly as it did in the first century of its existence is proof that the communists in the Church made very little headway. It was hard enough to combat pagan religion and philosophy. Had the property institutions been attacked also, the primary religious objects would have been lost sight of in the conflict.

In the second place the more practical minded Christian leaders would be antagonistic to a doctrine and practice which alienated many persons who might otherwise be won to the Church, and practically minded persons outside the Church regarded the individualists with more favor and were more easily influenced by them to become Christians themselves. The early importance attained by the Church of Rome is to be largely ascribed to the predominance in its councils of such practical persons.[39] Communism had no hold there at all and Chiliasm was never allowed to interfere with the practical workings of society.

By the time of Justin the three concepts; Chiliasm, Communism, and Individualism had arrived at a modus vivendi. According to this arrangement Chiliasm and Communism held sway as theories while individualism ruled in the world of fact. This agreement proved very satisfactory and for more than half a century was the the accepted thing. It is seen in full force in Tertullian.

There is a general tendency, due to the natural effects of use and disuse, for theories which do not correspond to realities to become discredited, even as theories. Conversely realities which at first lack theoritical justification tend to accumulate such justification

[39] E.g., Clement and Hermas.

with the lapse of time. It is therefore not surprising to find by the beginning of the Third Century, a movement to discard theoretical Chiliasm and communism and to validate by theoretical apologetic the actually existing individualism. These two processes in the nature of the case are closely connected with one another and it is not by mere chance that they find a common exponent in Clement of Alexandria. That famous opponent of Chiliasm is equally well known as the justifier of an extreme individualism. He greatly facilitated the spread of Chriatian theology by liberating it from the burden of an eschatological theory increasingly hard to reconcile with reality and also by bringing the economic teachings of Christianity into conformity with current practice. As noted above, there was one economic doctrine which neither he nor any other early Christian teacher ever attempted to reconcile with the facts, and it is undoubtedly true that the doctrine of the sinfulness of interest was alike detrimental to the spread of Christianity and to the general well being of society as it then existed. The reasons why this particular reality i.e., interest on money, was so slow in receiving its theoretical justification are numerous. The only ones that need concern us here are that the opposition to be overcome in this case was much more formidable than in the cases of Chiliasm and communism and the fact that this inconsistency on the part of the Christians did not in reality offer any very serious obstacle to the growth of the Church. Communism had no great body of Biblical authority at its back. There are indeed some texts in its favor but there are plenty of an opposite nature. The doctrine had no great popular prejudice in its favor. In addition it was insuperably difficult of realization in fact. It was otherwise with interest. The theoretical prejudice against interest was almost as great among the Jews and Pagans as among the Christians themselves. The Scriptures were unequivocal in their denunciation of it. Furthermore the correlative institutions of rent and profit offered so many opportunities to disguise the fact of interest that it was exceedingly easy to retain the theoretical opposition without ceasing the actual practice. Although Clement's condemnation of interest was probably merely an inherited prejudice it is by no means impossible that he considered that an attempt to justify it would endanger his defense of the more fundamental institution of private property. At any rate his course can

be defended as a practical one under the circumstances. Whatever may be said of its consistency, the Christian custom of condemning the theory and winking at the practice of interest worked well. The inconsistency which seems so glaring to us, was probably very largely unperceived by the ancient pagans—they had exactly the same inconsistency themselves.

In regard to Chiliasm and property, practically the same attitude prevailed. It worked indeed even more easily. In the West there seems to have been a considerable Chiliastic tradition. So long as this tradition did not result in any practices which interfered with the actual progress of the Church, the Fathers were content to let it alone. It did not, till at least the Third Century, hinder the acceptance of Christian doctrine by the pagans and may even have aided the process among some of the lower classes. Its long survival can be taken as sure proof that it did not effect either the development of the hierarchy or the institution of property.

As regards property of man in man, the superior power of the Christian religion to keep slaves in subjection accounts in no small measure for its relatively rapid rise to power in the ancient world. The pagan religion was inferior in usefulness to the Christian religion because it could not keep the slave contented with his position. The next world in the pagan theology was only a worse copy of this world. Christianity, in glaring contrast to paganism, proclaimed that the despised and afflicted were to sit on golden thrones in the next life. The more they were exploited in this life, the brighter their crown in the next one. The pagan slave was dangerous. The whole pre-Christian literature of Classical antiquity shows the ever present fear of a servile outbreak. There were good grounds for that fear. Outbreaks were frequent and of a most ferocious character. On more than one occasion they threatened the very existence of the ancient civilization. Christianity was able to make the slave contented to be a slave. It was economically an enormous advance over paganism. A master whose slaves were Christians was not afraid of being murdered by them. Not only was the master's life secure, his property was secure also. The pagan slaves were notorious thieves. The Christian slave did not rob his master. These facts gave Christianity an enormous leverage in its efforts to force its way into social recognition. It went far toward securing a favorable disposition

toward the new religion on the part of the influential, wealthy, and conservative elements in the population.

Into the general economic changes which began to operate toward the end of our period it is not our purpose to enter, but it is worth notice that the efforts made by the Church to save itself in the general ruin which overtook the ancient world, chiefly the institution of monasticism, were such as to secure more firmly than ever the hold of the Church upon society. The Church rapidly became an economic factor of the first importance. The only secure basis of lasting social influence is economic. Christianity by teaching the virtues of honesty frugality, simplicity, and charity laid the foundations of her subsequent triumph, and when she had great societies of men and women working hard and living plainly and adding all their accumulations to institutions belonging to the Church and directly under the supervision and control of the ecclesiastical authority, the Church paved the way for her subsequent domination of the civil government. Monastic communism, being economically superior to Chiliastic Communism, inevitably superseded it.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY CHURCH AND THE POPULACE

The transformation of early christianity from an eschatological to a socialized movement was the result of the interaction of three social groups—three 'publics'—the Jewish, the Pagan, and the Christian. It was a single movement, working itself out through these three 'crowds'. Christianity, like all other great religions, was in its first beginnings essentially a mob phenomenon—that is to say it was a very slow movement which had a long history back of it.

Perhaps no current opinion is more unfounded than the notion that mob movements are sudden and unpredictable. They are almost incredibly slow of development. The range of action found in the mob is more narrowly and rigidly circumscribed than in almost any other social group. A crowd is open to suggestions that are in line with its previous experience, and to no others.

The initial success of Christ with the Jewish crowds was only possible because for generations the whole Jewish public had been looking forward to a Messiah and a Messianic kingdom. In so far as Christ appeared to fulfill this preconceived expectation he gained popular support. When he disappointed it, he lost his popularity and his life.

The early and enormous success of the apostles on the day of Penticost and immediately afterwards was due primarily to the fact that the Chiliastic expectation preached to the Jerusalem crowds was very closely in line with their inherited beliefs. As soon as Christianity began to develope doctrines and practices even slightly at variance with those traditional to Judaism it lost the support of the Jewish public. Beginning as a strictly Jewish sect, it alienated practically the whole Jewish race within little more than a generation. This alienation was the inevitable effect of an idea of universalism opposed to the hereditary Jewish nationalism. This idea of universalism was not a new thing. It was to be found in the ancient Jewish scriptures. But it had never become popularized. It formed no part of the content of contemporary public opinion among the Jews. Christianity met with success in the great cosmopolitan centers, like Antioch and Alexandria, where universalism was a tradition and had

become a part of the crowd sentiment. It succeeded best of all in Rome where universalism reached its highest development. Yet even here a limitation is to be noted. Christianity was universal in its willingness to receive people of all races and nations. It was not universal in its willingness to acknowledge the validity of other religions. This variation from the traditional Greek and Roman universalism had momentous results. It made the propagation of the Christian Gospel much more difficult and involved the church, at least temporarily, in the current syncretism which was a popular movement. So e.g., we find Justin calling Socrates a Christian and asserting that the stories of Noah and Deucalion are merely versions of the same event.

The main characteristics of crowd psychology are familiar enough. Crowds do not reason. They accept or reject ideas as a whole. They are governed by phrases, symbols, and shibboleths. They tolerate neither discussion nor contradiction. The suggestions brought to bear on them invade the whole of their understanding and tend to transform themselves into acts. Crowds entertain only violent and extreme sentiments and they unconsciously accord a mysterious power to the formula or leader that for the moment arouses their enthusiasm.

Any movement in order to become popular, in order to 'get over' to the general public, has to operate within the limits set by this psychology. The amount of change, adaptation, and development necessary before a movement can fit into these limitations and express itself powerfully within them is so considerable that no historical example can probably be found where the required accommodation has been accomplished in less than three generations. It is the purpose of this chapter to trace, so far as the surviving source material permits, the steps of this accommodation in the case of early Christianity.

For some time before Christ the Jewish people had been restless. Their desires and aspirations for national and religious greatness had been repressed and inhibited. The unrest thus generated took various forms; patriotic uprisings, religious revivals, etc. Christ was at first considered merely as another Theudas or Judas of Galilee or John the Baptist. In the pagan world the pax Romana produced a somewhat similar restlessness. Travel increased; wandering, much

of it aimless, characterized whole classes of people;[1] there was a marked increase in crime, vice, insanity, and suicide which alarmed all the moralists. This condition of affairs was eminently suitable for the first beginnings of a crowd movement; indeed no great crowd movement can begin except under such circumstances. The wanderings of St. Paul and the other Christians apostles—called missionary journeys—were really only particular cases of a general condition. The same organic demand for new stimulation, the same sense of shattered religious and philosophic ideals prevailed in the pagan as in the Jewish world. It would be hard to find a greater contrast of character than Christ and Lucian. Yet the fiery earnestness with which Christ denounces contemporary Jewish religiosity and the cool cynicism with which Lucian mocks at the pagan piety of the same age have a like cause. Economic pressure on the lower strata of society contributed to the unrest. The slave, the small shopkeeper, and the free artisan had a hard time of it in the Roman world. Economically oppressed classes are material ready to the hand of the agitator, religious or other. In the crowd movements recorded in the Acts we can trace the first beginnings of the Christian populace.[2] "In Iconium a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed but the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gentiles and made them evil affected against the brethren. But the multitude of the city was divided and part held with the Jews and part with the apostles." At Lytra there was a typical case of mob action where the apostles were first worshipped and then stoned. In the cases of the mobs at Philippi and Ephesus we see the economic motive, the threatened loss of livlihood, entering along with anger at an attack on the received religion. In the case of the Jerusalem and Athenian crowds we see acceptance, or at least acquiescence, on the part of the crowd up to the point where Christianity breaks with their tradition. In general we see anger on the part of the crowds only after agitation diliberately stirred up by interested parties; priests, sorcerers, craftsmen or the like. Generally speaking the antipathy is no part of the crowd psychology, and on occasion the crowd may be on the side of the missionaries of the new

[1] E.g., the pagan philosophers.

[2] Acts 14:1-6.

religion. In general also the Christians were not sufficiently numerous to make a counter crowd demonstration of their own.

In Pliny's letter to Trojan, although it is a generation later than the Acts and refers to a region where Christianity had been preached for a considerable period of time, we find a marked instability in the attitude of the public: "Many of every age, every rank and even of both sexes are brought into danger and will be in the future. The contagion of that superstition has penetrated not only the cities but also the villages and country places and yet it sees possible to stop it and set it right. At any rate it is certain enough that the temples deserted until quite recently begin to be frequented, that the ceremonies of religion, long disused, are restored and that fodder for the victims comes to market, whereas buyers for it were until now very few. From this it may easily be supposed that a multitude of men can be reclaimed if there be a place of repentence."[3]

There seems no reasonable ground for doubting that Pliny's judgment was correct. While the blood of the martyrs is doubtless the seed of the church, a continuous, general, and relentless persecution can extirpate a religion in a given nation; as the history of the Inquisition abundantly proves. Still more easily can propaganda for the older religion win back its former adherents of the first and second generations. It is not, in general, till a generation has grown up entirely inside a new religion that such a religion is well established. The generation which at maturity makes the rupture with the older faith can be brought back to it by less expenditure of energy than was expended by them in breaking away in the first place. The success of the Jesuits e.g., is quite inexplicable on any other hypothesis. The generation who are children at the time their parents make the break with the old religion are notoriously undependable in the religious matters. It was in all probability these people that Pliny had to deal with. It is at least permissable to hazard the guess that the Laodiceans who aroused the wrath of the author of the Revelation were of this generation. It is certain that many of the 'Lapsi' who caused so much trouble to Christian apologists and church councils belonged in this chronological class.

[3] Pliny, Ep. xcvi.

In Justin Martyr we have a hint of a further development in the crowd attitude toward the Christians. Justin says: "When you (Jews) knew that He had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven as the prophets foretold He would, you not only did not repent of the wickedness you had committed, but at that time you selected and sent out from Jerusalem chosen men through all the land to tell that the godless heresy of the Christians had sprung up and to publish those things which all they, who knew us not, speak against us. So that you are the cause not only of your own unrighteousness but that of all other men."[4]

Irrespective of the exact historical accuracy of this statement, it is indicative of the process, technically known as 'circular interaction,' which is so essential a step in the development of popular opinion and the building up of crowd sentiment. Before any group of people can become either popular or unpopular there must be a focusing and fixation of public attention upon them. Even in the new Testament we find the Jews sending emissaries from city to city to call attention to the Christian propaganda. Prejudice against the Christians was thus aroused in persons who had never either seen or heard them. The basis of 'circular interaction' is unconscious or subconscious emotional reaction. A's frown brings a frown to the face of B. B's frown in turn intensifies A's. This simple process is the source of all expressions of crowd emotion. By multiplication of numbers and increase in the stimuli employed it is capable of provoking a vicious circle of feeling which eventually causes individuals in a crowd to do things and feel things which no individual in the crowd would do or feel when outside the circle. It is to the credit or discredit of the Jews that they first set this 'vicious circle' in operation against the Christians. Of course the same psychological principle operated to produce zeal and enthusiasm and contempt of pain and death in the Christian 'crowd'. By this process of 'circular interaction' the name, 'Christian,' had already in the time of Justin become a mob shibboleth. It seems to have operated precisely as the shibboleth 'traitor' operates on a patriotic crowd in war time, or 'scab' on a labor group. It became a shibboleth of exactly opposite significance in the Christian 'crowd'. The way was thus prepared for the next step in the process of developing the ultimate crisis. This step—the disparate 'universe of discourse'—is

[4] Dialogue XVIII.

exhibited in process of formation in the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp. The account, as we have it, undoubtedly contains later additions, but these additions even of miraculous elements, do not necessarily invalidate those portions of the story with which we are alone concerned. The martyrologist certainly had no intention of writing his story for the purpose of illustrating the principles of group psychology and the undesigned and incidental statements of crowd reactions are precisely the ones of value for our purpose. A few brief excerpts are sufficient to illustrate the stage reached in the growth of the disparate 'universe of discourse.' "The whole multitude, marvelling at the nobility of mind displayed by the devout and godly race of Christians cried out: "Away with the Atheists: let Polycarp be sought out."[5] He went eagerly forward with all haste and was conducted to the Stadium where the tumult was so great that there was no possibility of being heard."[6]

"Polycarp has confessed that he is Christian. This proclamation having been made by the herald, the whole multitude both of the heathen and Jews who dwelt in Smyrna cried out with uncontrollable fury and in a loud voice: "This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians and the overthrower of our gods, he who has been teaching many not to sacrifice or to worship the gods. Speaking thus they cried out and besought Phillip, the Asiarch, to let loose a lion upon Polycarp. But Philip answered that it was not lawful for him to do so seeing the shows of beasts were already finished. Then it seemed good to them to cry out with one voice that Polycarp should be burned alive."[7]

"This then was carried into effect with greater speed than it was spoken, the multitude immediately gathering together wood and fagots out of the shops and baths, the Jews especially, according to custom eagerly assisting them in it."[8]

"We afterwards took up his bones, as being more precious than the most exquisite jewels and more purified than gold and deposited them in a fitting place, whither, being gathered together as opportunity is allowed us, with joy and rejoicing the Lord shall grant us to celebrate

[5] Mart. Poly. III.
[6] *Ibid.*, VIII.
[7] *Ibid.*, XII.
[8] *Ibid.*, XIII.

the anniversary of his martyrdom both in memory of those who have already finished their course and for the exercising and preparation of those yet to walk in their steps."[9]

In the disparate universe of discourse in its complete form common shibboleths produce entirely different mental reactions—usually antagonistic ones. There is also complete accord as to the shibboleths. The cry here is at one time against the Atheists, then against the Christians. But the Christians could and did deny the charge of Atheism. They were as antagonistic to Atheism as the Pagans. An incomplete development of crowd feeling is evident on the part of the pagans. The Jews are still the inciters and leading spirits of the mob. The very statement that the Jews acted 'according to custom' shows that mobbing Christians was still looked upon as a peculiarly Jewish trait. It was not yet entirely spontaneous on the part of the pagan public. Most noticable of all is the indifference of the mob toward the Christians' adoration of relics of the martyrs. No effort was made to prevent the Christians from obtaining the bones of Polycarp. Either the cult of relics was not known to the pagans and Jews—though it seems to be firmly established among the Christians—or else, the effect of the cult in perpetuating christianity had not yet had time to make itself manifest to the pagan public—or to the Jewish. In any case we have here the plain evidence of the imperfectly developed condition of the crowd mind, owing perhaps to a too short tradition.

Our next evidence is the martyrdoms of Lyons and Vienne preserved in a letter quoted by Eusebius. "They (the Christians) endured nobly the injuries inflicted upon them by the populace, clamor and blows and draggings and roberies and stonings and imprisonments and all things which an infuriated mob delight in inflicting on enemies and adversaries."[10]

"When these accusations were reported all the people raged like wild beasts against us, so that even if any had before been moderate on account of friendship, they were now exceedingly furious and gnashed their teeth against us."

"When he (Bishop Pothinus) was brought to the tribunal accompanied by a multitude who shouted against him in every manner as

[9] *Ibid.*, XVIII.
[10] Hist. Ecl. VI.

if he were Christ himself, he bore noble witness. Then he was dragged away harshly and received blows of every kind. Those men near him struck him with their hands and feet, regardless of his age, and those at a distance hurled at him whatever they could seize, all of them thinking that they would be guilty of great wickedness and impiety if any possible abuse were omitted. For thus they thought to avenge their own deities."[11]

"But not even thus was their madness and cruelty toward the saints satisfied. Wild and barbarous tribes were not easily appeased and their violence found another peculiar opportunity in the dead bodies. For they cast to the dogs those who had died of suffocation in the prison and they exposed the remains left by the wild beasts and by fire mangled and charred. And some gnashed their teeth against them, but others mocked at them. The bodies of the martyrs having thus in every manner been exposed for six days were afterwards burned and reduced to ashes and swept into the Rhone so that no trace of them might appear on the earth. And this they did as if able to conquer God and prevent their new birth; 'that', as they said, 'they may have no hope of a resurrection through trust in which they bring to us this foreign and new religion.' "[12]

We have in this account a marked advance, as regards the development of the mob mind, over what is found in the martyrdom of Polycarp. Many of the 'crowd' phenomena are indeed the same but the differences are even more striking than the similarities. We find in Lyons no body of Jews or other especially interested persons leading the mob on by manifestations of peculiar zeal and forwardness. When the accounts are compared in their entirety it becomes at once manifest that there is a consistency of attitude, a whole heartedness in the actions of the Lyons mob that is lacking in the case of the Syrmnaens. There is a degree of familiarity with Christian doctrine—especially the doctrine of the resurrection—which denotes a much more through permeation of the public mind by Christianity. There may be no difference in the hatred of the two mobs for the new faith, but it had more content in the mind of the Gallic crowd. The degree of thought and pains taken by the Lyonese persecutors—the guards placed to prevent the Christians from stealing the relics of

[11] Hist. Ecc. V, 1.
[12] Hist. Ecc. V, II.

the martyrs, the elaborate efforts to nullify the possibility of a resurrection—the very extent and throughness and duration of the persecution are different from anything to be found in the other martyrdom.

The difficulty to be explained—if it is a difficulty—from the point of view of crowd psychology is that there is difference of only eleven years—taking the ordinary chronology—between the two persecutions. It is true that the Lyons persecution is the later, but the difference in the mob behavior is such as might well demand the lapse of a generation had the phenomena been exhibited by the public of the same city. There must unquestionably have been a great difference in the demotic composition of the populations of Lyons and Smyrna; the reference to barbarians in Lyons shows as much, but the behavior of mobs as controlled by the time needed for the focusing and fixation of attention and the development of a disparate universe of discourse is very little effected by difference of demotic composition. It has indeed been suggested by one critic,[13] that the persecution at Lyons belongs in the reign of Septimus Severns instead of that of Marcus Aurelius. This would explain away the difficulty, but there seems no necessary reason for adopting this opinion. It would rather appear that there existed peculiar conditions in Lyons and vicinity which account for the fact that the persecution, so far as we know, was confined to that locality and also for the fact that the mob mind was in a maturer state of antagonism to christianity. Just what these peculiar conditions were, it is impossible to say with entire certainty. However there is at least a very suggestive hint in a paragraph by the greatest modern authority on Roman Gaul[14] contained in his well known volume on Ancient France.[15] The paragraph is also worth quoting as giving a valuable insight into the psychology of the peoples of the ancient Roman World. "The Roman Empire was in no wise maintained by force but by the religious admiration it inspired. It would be without a parallel in the history of the world that a form of government held in popular detestation should have lasted for five centuries. It would be inexplicable that the thirty legions of the Empire should have constrained a hundred million men to obedience.

[13] Prof. J. W. Thompson.
[14] Fustel de Coulanges.
[15] Hist. des insts. politique de l'ancienne France. Par. II.

The reason of their obedience was that the Emperor, who personified the greatness of Rome was worshipped like a divinity by unanimous consent. There were altars in honor of the Emperor in the smallest townships of his realm. From one end of the Empire to the other a new religion was seen to arise in those days which had for its divinities the Emperors themselves. Some years before the Christian era the whole of Gaul, represented by sixty cities, built in common a temple near the city of Lyons in honor of Augustus. Its priests, elected by the united Gallic cities, were the principal personages in their country. It is impossible to attribute all this to fear and servility. Whole nations are not servile and especially for three centuries. It was not the courtiers who worshipped the prince, it was Rome, and it was not Rome merely but it was Gaul, it was Spain. It was Greece and Asia."

While no dogmatic assertion is justified, it does not, perhaps, exceed the limits of reasonable inference to suppose that the existence of this noted center of Emperor worship in the immediate neighborhood of Lyons may account, in part at least, for the especial hatred of the populace of that city for persons who refused to sacrifice to the Emperor and also for the maturity of their feeling against the Christians, who were as far as we are aware, probably the only persons who refused thus to sacrifice. This stray bit of evidence is admittedly not conclusive. It is offered merely for what it may be worth. There is evidence that by the middle of the second Century popular opinion was sufficiently inflamed against the Christians to render the administration of justice precarious because of mob violence. Edicts of Hadrian and Antonius Pious specifically declared that the clamor of the multitude should not be received as legal evidence to convict or to punish them, as such tumultuous accusations were repugnant both to the firmness and the equity of the law.[16]

This attitude seems to have persisted with relatively little change for about a century. During this period the official 'persecutions' were neither numerous nor severe. From the very few scattered and incidental references which have alone survived regarding the mob feeling of the time, we can assert no more than that it was an exasperated one, likely to break out upon provocation but under ordinary

[16] Eus. H. E. IV, 26.

circumstances more or less in obeyance. On the whole it was undoubtedly more violent at the end of the period tham at the beginning.

Fortunately from the middle of the third Century onwards we have a fairly continuous history of a single 'public' (Alexandria) which is lacking before this time. The Alexandrian populace were noted for their tumultuous disposition, but we have no reliable account of their behavior towards the Christians until the time of Serverus, 202 A.D. In the account given by Eusebius of the martydom of the beautiful virgin, Potamiaena, it is stated that: "the people attempted to annoy and insult her with abusive words." As however the intervention of a single officer sufficed to protect her from the people on this occasion, the public sentiment cannot have been inflamed to any alarming extent. If we may trust Palladius, her martyrdom was the result of a plot of a would-be ravisher and in any case it was not the product of any spontanious popular movement.

In the period between 202 A.D. and 249 A.D. a well developed tradition of hatred and violence grew up in the popular mind. We have no record of the steps in the process but the extant accounts of the Decian and Valerian persecutions in Alexandria leave no doubt of the fact. These persecutions can only be called 'legal' by a violent stretch of verbal usage. They were mob lynchings, sometimes sanctioned by the forms of law, but quite as often without even the barest pretense of judicial execution. They were quite as frequent and as savage in the later part of the reign of Philip, as in the time of Decius. They were not called forth by any imperial edict—they preceeded the edict by at least a year and were of a character such as no merely governmental, legal precess would ever, or could ever, take on. Mobbing Christians had become a form of popular sport, a generally shared sort of public amusement—exciting and not dangerous. The letter of Bishop Dionysius makes this very clear. To quote: "The persecution among us did not begin with the royal decree but proceeded it an entire year. The prophet and author of evils to this city moved and aroused against us the masses of the heathen rekindling among them the superstition of their country and finding full opportunity for any wickedness. They considered this the only pious service of their demons that they should slay us." Then follows a long list of mob lynchings of which we take a single specimen: "They seized Serapion in his own house and tortured him

and having broken all his limbs, they threw him headlong from an upper story."[17] "And there was no street, nor public read, nor lane open to us night or day but always and everywhere all them cried out that if anyone would not repeat their impious words, he should be immediately dragged away and burned. And matters continued thus for a considerable time. But a sedition and civil war came upon the wretched people and turned their cruelty toward us against one another. So we breathed for a while as they ceased from their rage against us."[18]

The mob broke loose against the Christians again the following year, but there is no object in cataloguing the grewsome exhibitions of crowd brutality. It is evident that what we have in this account is no exhibition of political oppression by a tyrannical government, but a genuine outbreak of group animosity which had been long incubating in the popular mind. All the phenomena which are characteristic of fully matured public feeling are found complete; circular interaction, shibboleths, sect isolation devices and the rest. When public feeling has developed to such a degree of intensity as this, the accumlated sentiment and social unrest must of necessity discharge themselves in some form of direct group action. This direct action however may take the from either of physical violence or, under certain conditions, of some sort of mystical experience; conversion, dancing, rolling on the ground, etc. In exceptional cases the two forms are combined. An illustration of this latter phenomenon is given by Bishop Dionysius in this same letter; "In Cephus, a large assembly gathered with us and God opened for us a door for the word. At first we were persecuted and stoned but afterward not a few of the heathen forsook their idols and turned to God."[19] It is necessary to mention perhaps the largest, and certainly the most dignified and respectable crowd that is to be met with in connection with this persecution—that of Carthage on the occasion of the martyrdom of Bishop Cyprian. We find here neither rage on one side nor unseemly exaltation on the other. Pagans and Christians alike behaved with decent seriousness at the death of that famous man who was equally respected by all classes of the population. But martyrs of the social

[17] Eus. His. Ecc. VI, 41.
[18] Eus. His. Ecc. VI, 41.
[19] His. Ecc. VII, 11.

eminence of Cyprian were very rare, and orderly behaviour in such a vast multitude as witnessed his end was still rarer.

To return to the populace of Alexandria. The long peace of the Church which intervened between the persecution of Valerian and that of Diocletian witnessed in Alexandria, as elsewhere, a great growth of Christianity in numbers, influence, and wealth. It would perhaps be going beyond the evidence to say that in this interval, the majority of the population of the city were won over to the new faith, but it is certain that the number of Christians became so great as to intimidate the pagan portion of the people. The Alexandrian mob was still very much in evidence but it gradually ceased to harrass the Christians except under the most exceptional circumstances. The dangers of such action became so considerable and the chances of success so problematical that we find a period when a practice of mutual forbearance governed the behavior of the hostile groups.

The study of crowd psychology presents no more impressive contrast than that exhibited by the people of Alexandria during the Diocletian persecution compared with their behavior during that of Decius. In the last and greatest of the persecutions, in the most tumultuous city of the empire, the mob took no part. Like the famous image of Brutus, it is more conspicuous by its absence than it would be by its presence. The persecution was a purely governmental measure officially carried out by judges and executioners in accordance with orders. In one obscure and doubtful instance we are told that the bystanders beat certain martyrs when legal permission was given to the people to treat them so. In another case we are told that the cruelty of the punishments filled the spectators with fear. These are the only references to the public that occur in the long and minute account of an eye witness of famous events extending over a considerable number of years. Both before and after this period the mob of the Egyptian metropolis exhibits the utmost extreme of religious fanaticism. During this period that mob had to be most carefully considered by the government in other than religious matters. But as a religious power it did not exist. Had the persecution of Diocletian happened a generation earlier it could have counted on a very considerable degree of popular support, had it happened a generation later it would have caused a

revolt that could only have been put down by a large army. Happening at the precise time it did, it provoked no popular reaction at all.

This strange apathy is not peculiar to Alexandria. Practically without exception the authentic acts of the martyrs of this persecution are court records taken down by the official stenographers in the ordinary course of the day's work. They are dry, mechanical, and repetitious to a degree. They exhibit, in general, harrassed and exasperated judges driven to the infliction of extreme penalties in the face of a cold and skeptical public. One imperial decree ordered that all men, women, and children, even infants at the breast, should sacrifice and offer oblations, that guards should be placed in the markets and at the baths in order to enforce sacrifices there. The popular reaction in Caesarea is thus recorded: "The heathen blamed the severity and exceeding absurdity of what was done for these things appeared to them extreme and burdensome."[20] "He (the Judge) ordered the dead to be exposed in the open air as food for wild beasts; and beasts and birds of prey scattered the human limbs here and there, so that nothing appeared more horrible even to those who formerly hated us, though they bewailed not so much the calamity of those against whom these things were done as the outrage against themselves and the common nature of man."[21]

The one thing to be said of this type of mob mind is manifestly that it is transitional. The pendulum has swung through exactly half its arc and for the brief instant presents the fallacious appearance of quiescence. How transitory this quiet was on the part of the Alexandrian mob is evidenced by the history of Athanasius. That great statesman conciliated and consolidated public opinion in Egypt. Backed by this opinion he practically cancelled the power of the civil authorities of the country and negotiated as an equal with the emperors. For the first time in more than three centuries the will of the common people again became a power able to limit the military despotism which dominated the civilized world.

The re-birth of popular government in the Fourth century through the agency of Christian mobs is the most important preliminary step in the growth of the political power of the Catholic Church.

[20] Eus. Mart. Pal. II.
[21] *Ibid.*, Chap. II.

A study of the mobs of Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople and other great cities shows beyond question that the political power of the Church had its origin in no alliance with imperial authority, but was independent of and generally antagonistic to that authority. The history of these Christian mobs lies outside the limits of our study but it is worth while in the case of the Alexandrian populace to give two or three brief extracts illustrating the final steps of the process which changed a fanatically pagan mob into an equally fanatical Christian one. What we have to consider is only the last stage of an evolution already more than half complete at the time of the Nicene Council. Under extreme provocation and certain of imperial complacency at their excesses, the pagan mob during the reign of Julian indulged in one last outburst against the exceedingly unpopular George of Cappadocia who had been forcibly intruded into the seat of Athanasius. To quote the Historian Socrates: "The Christians on discovering these abominations went forth eagerly to expose them to the view and execration of all and therefore carried the skulls throughout the city in a kind of triumphal procession for the inspection of the people. When the pagans of Alexandria beheld this, unable to bear the insulting character of the act, they became so exasperated that they assailed the Christians with whatever weapons chanced to come to hand, in their fury destroying numbers of them in a variety of ways and, as it generally happens in such a case, neither friends or relations were spared but friends, brothers, parents, and children imbued their hands in each others blood. The pagans having dragged George out of the church, fastened him to a camel and when they had torn him to pieces they burned him together with the camel."[22] In this account we see the last expiring efforts of the pagan mob movement. Any mob movement collapses rapidly when it turns in upon itself, and the evil results of its violence react immediately upon the members of the mob. By this time it is evident that the number of Christians in Alexandria was so large that any public persecution of them brought serious and unendurable consequences upon the populace generally. Then the movement ended.

But in the two centuries or more that the pagan movement lasted, a contrary Christian mob movement had been developing along the same general lines as the other. This movement, being later in its

[22] Hist. Ecc. III, 1.

inception, came to a head correspondingly later and reached its crisis under the patriarch Cyril. Its violence was first directed against the Jews whom the Christians appear to have hated even more than they hated the pagans. The Jews were the weaker and less numerous faction opposed to the Christians and as the Pagans seem to have liked them too little to support them against the Christians, it is not surprising that the Christian mob, which had pretty well reduced the political authorities to impotence, should vent its rage against the Jews and their synagogues. "Cyril accompanied by an immense crowd of people, going to their synagogues, took them away from them and drove the Jews out of the city, permitting the multitude to plunder their goods. Thus the Jews who had inhabited the city from the time of Alexander were expelled from it."[23]

Sometime after the expulsion of the Jews, the Christian mob, now directing its spite against the rapidly disappearing paganism, perpetrated perhaps the most atrocious crime that stains the history of Alexandria—the murder of Hypatia. This beautiful, learned, and virtuous woman, 'the fairest flower of paganism' is one of the very few members of her sex who has attained high eminence in the realm of philosophical speculation. She enjoyed the deserved esteem of all the intellectual leaders of her age—Christian as well as pagan—and to the latest ages her name will be mentioned with respect by all those speculative thinkers whose respect can confer honor. Socrates describes her murder as follows: "It was calumniously reported among the Christian populace that it was she who prevented Orestes from being reconciled to the bishop. Some of them therefore hurrried away by a fierce and bigoted zeal, whose ringleader was a reader named Peter, waylaid her returning home and dragged her from her carriage; they took her to the church called Ceasareum where they completely stripped her and then murdered her with oyster shells. After tearing her body in pieces, they took her mangled limbs to a place called Cinaron and there burned them."[24]

Christian crowd sentiment when hardly yet at its full power was deprived of its original object of animosity by the collapse of paganism. Being under the psychological necessity of expressing itself, this mob feeling happened to take as shibboleths some current

[23] Socrates Hist. Ecc. IIII, 13.
[24] Hist. Ecc. VII, 15.

theological catchwords. The subsequent history of Alexandria and other great cities presents therefore the strange scene of rival sects disturbing public order and profoundly agitating vast throngs of people in a struggle over the most obstruse and recondite metaphysical concepts. For the sake of clear thinking it is necessary for us to remind ourselves that these concepts are merely weird garments fortuitously snatched up to cover the nakedness of a profound social and economic revolution.

The above sketch, imperfect as it is and full of lacunae due to the inadequacy of the primary source material, is yet perhaps complete enough to enable us to summarize the chief steps in the process of the socialization in its aspect of a crowd movement. We have seen that this crowd movement, like all others, had its origin in social unrest due to shattered private and community ideals. The customary forms of expression being inhibited or repressed, the balked disposition experienced an organic demand for new stimulation. This new stimulation was sought in various ways; aimless or practically aimless travelling or local wandering, local disorder and agitation, increase in crime—and insanity. Gradually this unrest focused itself and public attention became fixed on Christianity. By the process of circular interaction, the so-called 'vicious circle', public sentiment increased in intensity, the name 'Christian' became a shibboleth. When applied to an individual it let loose upon him the pent up emotion of the mob—an emotion or unreflective rage and anger. By the further process of idealization or sublimation, using the terms in their technical sense, the populace came to believe that Christianity was the great and superhuman (daemoniac) source of all evils; earthquakes, disease epidemics, famine etc. Seeking release for psychic tensions which were not understood and largely subconscious, they found it in a reversion to the oldest of the 'releasing instincts' that of hunting. The primary thing about the persecutions is that they were man hunts. The cruelty exhibited, while also serving as a tension release for mob feeling, is psychologically a secondary form of such release—though a very old form. The discharge of the accumulated public sentiment and of the severe social tensions produced group action of two kinds: (a) Direct action: tearing the victim in pieces, gathering wood to burn him, striking him with sticks, stones, etc. (b) Expressive action, taking the form

of shouts, cries and ejaculations which became customary and traditional, 'Christianos ad leones.' The very methods of lynching became ceremonial and even ritualistic. The beasts were first choice, then burning and then other forms in descending scale. The narrow range of the mob mind is illustrated by the closeness with which it adhered to contemporary judicial methods of punishment. The most obvious method of killing, and one which had the advantage of enabling a great number of people to see what was going on, the method of hanging, which is in such common use by mobs of our day, does not seem to have been employed by the ancient crowds—at any rate its use was rare in the modern form, strangling. There are some cases of hanging naked women by one foot. Expressive action also took the form of wild and fantastic legends of cannibalism, child murder and such like. The crisis of this pagan mob movement came about the middle of the third century. The Decian persecution appears to have been 'popular' in the strict etymological sense of that word. The persecution of Diolection, though the most severe, seems to have had no great force of pagan public sentiment behind it. That sentiment was not hostile; it was neutral. The populace did nothing to hinder the measures of the government and it did nothing to help them. In another generation the pagan movement had spent itself. This analysis of the pagan mob sentiment against the Christians is applicable mutatis nominibus, to the Christians mob movement against the pagans and to the movement of the 'orthodox' Christians against the 'heretics.' Perhaps we should say here, in defense of human nature, that these mob movements were not due to human depravity; they were, in strict literalness, diseases, epidemics of nervous disorder induced by pathological social conditions. Before any persecuting attitude became habitual to the pagan populace pagan common sense had exhausted argument, persuasion, expostulation and every other intellectual device. Only after reason and religion (in the pagan sense) had been employed in vain; only after long exasperation at a hopeless situation, when absolutely nothing else could be done, was popular violence aroused. Social conditions being what they were, traditional mental attitudes common to pagan and Christians alike required that something be done and mob action was the last desperate alternative to the admission of a new intellectual concept.

The function of Chiliasm in this crowd movement is plain from its history as previously sketched. It was a Christian shibboleth peculiarly valuable for securing group cohesion, and for arousing individual staying power in times of persecution. Of the numerous characteristics of successful 'sect shibboleths' three are perhaps especially note worthy: (a) Satisfaction of the demand for mystical experience. (b) Operation as an isolating device (c) Revolt against the prevailing moral order. In the period of greatest need Chiliasm fulfilled these requirements very well. Many a Christian of little education was lifted out of himself to endure martyrdom by somewhat crass imaginations of participation in the reign of the saints in the rebuilt Jerusalem. Many a little band of sectaries maintained their group solidarity because of the belief that they were the elect people 'chosen of God' for future glory in the millennial kingdom. Many a faithful one who would otherwise have given up in despair, must have gained strength and courage from the thought of that happy era, soon to come, when the cruel persecutors of the church would be slaves suffered to live only that their servitude might augment the dignity and honor of the saints in the beatific kingdom.

The relation of the Chiliastic expectation to that strange insensibility to pain which was so remarkable a characteristic of the early martyrs cannot be stated with exactness. It was probably close—at least in numerous cases. We have what seems to be entirely trustworthy evidence that not only strong men but even delicate and sensitive women exhibited the power of inhibiting the normal reactions to the most excrutiating torments. This almost incredible power of inhibition can only be explained as the result of the building up of a pathologically intense, ecstatic, mental state. This ecstatic mental state would appear to have been acquired by a series of psychic changes and organic, neuronic adjustments requiring, ordinarily, a fairly considerable amount of time. This peculiar psychological condition had not merely to be built up. It must have attained an extraordinary degree of habituation in order to render its subjects impervious to such extreme sensory excitations. The requisite degree of imperviousness can hardly have been acquired without such permeation of consciousness by imagination as constituted a complete subjective universe. Many of the martyrs would seem to have lived, more or less habitually, in a mental world of their own

which shut them off from susceptibility to external stimuli. This condition is frequently found in artists and thinkers, and with the accompanying insensibility to pain, is a common phenomenon in the 'trance' state as well as in some forms of insanity.[25]

It would go beyond the evidence to claim that Chiliastic concepts functioned exclusively, or even predominantly, in the production of the 'martyr psychosis,' but the evidence does point to the conclusion that apocalyptic expectations held a more prominent place in the consciousness of the martyrs than in that of the generality of Christians. It is certain that Chiliasm became especially manifest in times of persecution but Chiliasm must have operated even in ordinary times to produce the phenomena which persecution brought into prominence. Even today, in the entire absence of persecution, Chiliastic excitement among certain groups of secretaries produces types of religious psychosis closely similar to those exhibited by the martyrs.[26]

On the whole the conclusion appears warranted that the increasing power and progressive socialization of the church, which made persecution at first hopeless and at last impossible, rendered Chiliasm, as a crowd shibboleth, gradually useless and finally pernicious to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Had further persecutions been possible Chiliasm would no doubt have been retained longer, but its usefulness was fatally impaired when the majority of people nominally embraced Christianity. It was of little or no value in those struggles with heretical Christian sects which engaged the activities of orthodox mobs from the time of Constantine onwards. Other shibboleths such as 'The Church' and 'Catholicism' were more effective in this contest. Similarly for the larger purpose of ecclesiastical polity, agencies like monasticism and missionary enterprise were employed, which conserved the shibboleth values of Chiliasm and were free from its defects as an instrument of hierarchial ambition. The aims of the rulers of the Church became increasingly social and political and with such aims Chiliasm was fundamentally incompatible.

[25] Cf. E. Underhill 'Mysticism.'

[26] E.g., The Dukhabours.

CHAPTER IV

CHILIASM AND PATRIOTISM

Perhaps the most pronounced characteristic of pre-Christian, Judaistic Chiliasm is its nationalistic or ethnic patriotism. Of course any attempt to rigidly differentiate the nationalistic and religious concepts of the Hebrews of the two centuries preceding the advent of Christianity would be foredoomed to failure. Never perhaps were patriotism and religion more nearly synonymous than at this period among this people. That their Chiliasm has a strongly nationalistic content is therefore natural and inevitable. The same patriotic animus is to be found in a great number of their other religious tenets and practices. The emphasis is perpetually upon the enhancement of the value of the Jewish race and nation and the corresponding depreciation of other nations and faiths.

But while it is true, that, owing to the inseparable integration of Church and State in Judea, in the first two centuries before Christ, we find a very considerable proportion of the religious beliefs and observances highly charged with nationalistic patriotism; this is perhaps more noticeable in the case of Chiliasm than in the case of any other contemporary theological concept. The nature of the Millennial belief was such as qualified it to function with especial ease and success in that particular historical situation. For considerably more than half a century before the birth of Christ the dominant fact in Hebrew history is the increase of the power and influence of the Roman state in the political life of the Jewish people. This increase was perfectly natural. Indeed it was inevitable. That the petty Judean state would eventually be absorbed in the world wide republic was a fact patent to any reasonably intelligent student of the situation.[1] Under the circumstances it could hardly fail to take place even without any direct provocation to overt action on the part of either Jews or Romans. It is not our purpose to follow the long, hopeless struggle of the Jews against the inevitable extinction of their political independence. The Jew was fighting against fate. From the first interference of Rome in the affairs of Palestine to the last execution of Bar Cochba rebels, the end was never in real doubt—

[1] Cf. R. Charles, Doctrine of a Future Life.

humanly speaking. The inevitableness of the catastrophe in this long drawn out tragedy is, in the writer's judgment, in some measurable degree connected both with the nature and subsequent history of Jewish Chiliasm. Later Hebrew Chiliasm is a very peculiar form of belief. It is characterized by what can only be called a crass and exaggerated anthropomorphic supernaturalism. It would seem as if pari passu with the increasing conviction of the futility of opposition to the power of Rome, there was an increasing conviction of a catastrophic supernal manifestation, which manifestation in its details became ever more and more crude and vulgar. The developing knowledge and conviction of the invincible power of Rome is sufficient to explain the increasing dependence upon supernatural aid for deliverance—but the peculiar crassness of the supernaturalism is the arresting element in the later Jewish Chiliastic writings. When every allowance has been made for the natural exuberance of the Oriental imagination something still remains to be accounted for. It is at least possible that the, to our taste, repulsive features of supernalistic vengeance and glory are the result of a long process of selection. In no people of whom we have historical knowledge is the spirit of nationalistic patriotism more deeply rooted than in the Jew. We may take it that practically all the Hebrews of the generations under discussion believed in an eventually triumphant Jewish state. Differences of education, and religious faith, however, conditioned the opinions as to the time when this triumphant state would appear and still more the method by which it would appear. The better educated Jews, who were conversant with the political conditions of the contemporary world and whose belief in supernatural aid was perhaps weakest, appear to have adopted a laissez-faire attitude. They seem to have been advocates of a pro-Roman policy; to make the best of the existing Roman supremacy waiting for the unpredictable time when Rome should follow the path of Egypt, Assyria, and other world powers who in their several ages had subjugated the children of Abraham. This party would perhaps have been willing to take advantage of any condition of affairs which offered a reasonably safe opportunity of successful revolt but under existing conditions they were opposed to armed resistance to the mistress of the world.

At the other end of the scale was a party of bigotedly and fanatically zealous patriots obsessed with the idea that immediate supernatural assistance would be forthcoming in the event of armed revolt. Between these two parties was another party—if it may be called such—partaking in various degrees of the characteristics of these two extremists parties. The Apocaliptic and Chiliastic literature of the period was extensive. It would be possible to arrange even such fragments as remain, according to the preponderance of supernal elements. It would seem to be a rational deduction that if we possessed this literature in its completeness we should be able (bearing in mind that we are dealing with a relatively considerable period of time) to follow the whole process of the supersession of more rational Chiliastic concepts in favor of the more crudely supernaturalistic ones. Rome was at once strongly repressive of movements for political liberty and tolerant of religious liberty. Those writings in which Chiliastic expectations took the form of advocating the active preparing for and co-operating with the expected Messiah would suffer extinction. On the other hand those Chiliastic beliefs which inculcated absolute and entire dependence upon supernatural aid for the achievement of national independence would be politically harmless and exuberance in such imaginings might flourish unhindered. The more fantastic and absurd the expectations the less likely they were to be suppressed by the imperial authorities. Whatever the measure of truth in the above conjecture it is certain that Jewish Chiliasm developed to the last extreme of extravagance. With the doubtful exception of some Hindu legends, there is nothing, which more exceeds the bounds of reason and common sense, in the literature of the world. It is perhaps not too much to say that Jewish Chiliasm died of excess development—a method of extinction of which nature makes liberal use.

The later history of Jewish Chiliasm does not concern us. Under the constantly repeated blows of disappointment it changed its form and content into the more rational concept of salvation and glorification of the individual human soul after death. What does concern us is that this Jewish Chiliasm in all but its most extreme form was taken over by Christianity. The intellectual background of Hebrew patriotism of course persisted in the Christians of the first generation who were largely Jews or Proselytes. The imminent divine kingdom

of Christ does indeed take the place of the lower concept of a rigidly nationalistic kingdom. The kingdom of Christ even to the first generation of Christians must have had a larger content than the previous Jewish belief which it fulfilled and supplemented. Yet the essential thing to remember is that so far at least as the Jewish Christians were concerned Chiliastic expectations, though somewhat further extended, were still a form of expression for the forces of Hebrew nationalistic patriotism. The kingdom of the Jews had been transformed, or perhaps better, transmogrified, into the Kingdom of Christ and his saints[2] but its essential content was unchanged and so long at least as a considerable proportion of Christians were converted Jews this condition of affairs persisted. The constant criticism of Chiliasm by Gentile Christians is that it is Judaizing. It is perhaps not exceeding the limits of permissable hypothesis to suppose that one of the reasons why Chiliasm failed to make a permanent place for itself in the belief of the universal church is to be found in this very fact that it was in essence a form of political, Jewish, nationalistic patriotism, to which the other portions of the Christian world, perhaps unconsciously, but not the less effectively, objected.

The success of Roman imperialism in denationalizing conquered peoples was truly remarkable. In this most difficult task of practical statesmanship its accomplishments far surpass those of any other empire, ancient or modern. But this success, great and unparalleled as it was, nevertheless was not absolute. Except in particular cases it was never really complete. The measure of its accomplishment was very different in different parts of the empire. In Italy, Gaul, Spain, and perhaps Britain its success may fairly be considered complete, but these were countries where the proportion of Roman settlers and colonists was very large. They were countries, furthermore, which were early conquered—countries, which, at the time of the Roman conquest, had not advanced a great distance toward the attainment of national solidarity in politics, religion, art, literature, war or social intercourse. This lack of development of local, national institutions and psychology left the ground relatively free for the development of distinctively Roman civilization and habits of thought. The comparative freedom of these Western provinces of

[2] Cf. S. J. Case, The Messianic Hope.

the empire from religious heresies at the time that the Eastern provinces were so prolific of them, is commonly ascribed to inferior aptitude of these Western peoples for metaphysical speculation. We do not attempt to deny such inferiority, though the subsequent development of metaphysical speculation in Western Europe during the time that the reviving sense of nationality first began to be felt in the Middle Ages and Reformation Era, suggests another cause as operative.

If we consider three regions where Chiliasm, and also unquestionable heresies, were particularly rife; i.e., Phrygia, Egypt, and Roman Africa we see at once that these regions were seats of old, deeply rooted, and thoroughly developed civilizations. To go into the subject merely a little way we find that a nationalistic tradition existed in Phrygia at the time of the composition of the Iliad.[3] This nationalistic tradition was considerably more than a thousand years old at the time of the introduction of Christianity. Roman political power had by this time been thoroughly established in the country and there is no reason to believe that political rebellion was contemplated at the time of the rise of Chiliasm and the heresies. But while armed revolt may not have been considered as practicable, or even as desirable, the fundamental, nationalistic characteristics of the underlying strata of the population do not seem to have been very greatly altered. Long before the advent either of the Roman political power or the Christian religion a homogenous, national psychology had become characteristic of the Phrygian population. The Phrygian seems to have put on Christianity very much as he put on the toga. He wore the toga regularly and easily enough it may be, but in gestures and action, in speech and manner, he was still a Phrygian. This typical Phrygian seems to have been commonly regarded in the contemporary world as a bucolic sort of individual, much perhaps as a Kansan is regarded in the United States, and with perhaps as much or as little reason. The fact is that while ancient Phrygia without question possessed a large rural population, it also possessed numerous cities where the graces and amenities of life were as fully developed as in any of the neighboring provinces which did not suffer from the attribution of rusticity. The human instinct to botanize a

[3] Cf. Il., III, 187.

neighboring people while doubtless adding to the gaiety of nations has to be taken *magno* cum grano salis by the historian.

Whatever may be said of their other cultural institutions it is a fact that the Phrygians at the time of the introduction of Christianity had already developed certain distinctively national, religious characteristics which marked them off from their neighbors.

The Phrygian Mysteries while doubtless in certain broad characteristics similar to the Eleusinian Mysteries had peculiarities of their own and were cherished by the people as something particularly expressive of their especial form of the philosophy of life. In spite of any decay and degradation which may have overtaken these mysteries in the course of a long history, it is certain that their primary object was the elevation and enhancement of life.

The national religious consciousness of Phrygia was peculiar in the prominent place given to women. To this day it is impossible to say with certainty whether the superior place in their religious system is held by the male or female concepts of deity. Perhaps on the whole the female concept preponderates.[4] What is true of theology is also true of cultus. Priestesses and prophetesses held a position of marked prominence and importance. Possibly the most pronouncedly distinctive mark of Phrygian religion was the emphasis upon inspiration, immediate divine revelation, exstatic conditions of religious excitation, the well known "Phrygian Frenzy." If now, with even this meagre, historical, nationalistic background in view, we examine the expression of Chiliasm in Phrygia we see at once how it took the form and color of the national psychology. The most pronounced Chiliastic expectations are found in Montanism, which was so strongly marked by characteristics of its place of origin that it was known throughout the rest of the Christian world as the 'Phrygian Heresy.' So strong was the influence of national sentiment that a very marked change was introduced in one, most important particular. Christian Chiliasm, originating as a Jewish form of nationalistic patriotism, emphasized the fact that in the Millennium Christ was to reign in Jerusalem, which was to supplant Rome as the center and ruler of the world. In this respect Phrygian Chiliasm makes a complete break with the Hebrew tradition. Christ was to appear and reign, not in Jerusalem, but in Pepuza. An insignificant

[4] Cf. W. M. Ramsay., Art. *Phrygians*, Enc. of Religion and Ethics.

town of Phrygia was to become the capitol of the world wide kingdom of Christ on earth, displacing both Rome and Jerusalem. Nationalistic patriotism—not to say megalomania—could scarcely go farther.

So too Phrygian Chiliasm is remarkable for the prominence and importance of the position of women in the movement. The women, Prisca and the others, seem to have been fully as prominent in the movement as Montanus himself and they exercised a degree of influence to which it would be difficult to find a parallel in contemporary Christian movements in other countries.

Similarly, visions, revelations, inspirations, extraordinary conditions of religious excitation are a marked feature of Phrygian Chiliasm. They are of course the old 'Phrygian Frenzy' in Christian guise.

Not to pursue this phase of the subject in more detail, it is evident that Phrygian Chiliasm bore in a marked degree the impress of the national, religious psychology. Those bishops of Pontus and Syria who persuaded their people to settle all their worldly affairs and go out into neighboring deserts to await the coming of Christ in glory, exhibit in a more naïve form the power of local group habits of thought to transform concepts intruded from outside the group.

In the case of Egypt it is gratuitous labor to dwell upon the fact that the native population at the advent of Christianity had developed a nationalistic like-mindedness. This nation even in the year 1 A.D. had an historical antiquity greater than any other nation can show today—with the doubtful exception of China. In no other nation in the world has there been such an opportunity for climatic and geographic influences to work their full effect in producing psychological homogeneity among a population on the whole remarkably little disturbed in demotic composition. It is to be remarked also that the climatic and geographic environments are themselves remarkably homogeneous throughout the whole extent of the nation. The deterministic school of historians have a model made to hand in the history of Egypt—a model of which it must be confessed they have made very skillful use.[5] This is not the place, even if the writer had the requisite knowledge, to enter into any extended discussion of the national psychology of the Egyptian populace. It is sufficient

[5] Cf. Buckle, Intro. to the Hist. of Civilization in England.

to mention one predominating feature of that psychology, a feature so persistent and ubiquitous that the study of it alone, enables the investigator to obtain a true insight into much that is otherwise obscure in almost every variety of social expression among the Egyptians; law, politics, government, art, science, literature, and religion. This predominating feature can perhaps be best defined as a certain low estimate of the value of individuality in the common man, a cheap appraisal of the worthwhileness of the life of the ordinary person. It seems to have a relatively slight ethnic element—if indeed it can be truthfully said to have any. It makes its appearance substantially unchanged in all subtropical countries situated in the same general physical environment as Egypt; e.g., Southern China, India, Mesopotamia, Mexico and Yucatan; in all countries that is, where the natural conditions for sustaining and propagating human life are relatively easy and where the economic surplus of productive physical, as opposed to intellectual, labor is unusually great. Nevertheless the fact that Egypt is in this category is due to a highly special geographic phenomenon, the overflow of the river Nile. So that by comparison with the nations immediately contiguous to Egypt, this psychology may be truly said to be distinctively national in spite of its similarity to that of other peoples more remote geographically.

It is perhaps unnecessary to do more than mention a very few of the ways in which this characteristic of Egyptian psychology has affected the national life. It has rendered the population largely passive under the successive yolks of Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks, and Englishmen, to mention only some of the more prominent exploiters. It has made possible the erection of those vast pyramids of stone, devoid alike of necessity or use, which remain to this day one of the wonders of the world. It has enabled religions at once superstitious and debasing to flourish in the midst of a high degree of material civilization.

For our purpose it is sufficient to call attention to the fact that this mental bias makes any change, even in the acquired concepts of the people, especially difficult of accomplishment. This is very well illustrated, in the study of Egyptian Chiliasm. In no other country were the efforts necessary to overthrow Chiliastic concepts so long drawn out, so persistent, so futile of immediate success. Indeed they

did not finally succeed till long after the period embraced in this study. When the good bishop Dionysius of Alexandria 247-264 A. D., held his conference with the village Chiliasts of the Arsinoite nome, some of them were indeed won over, but we are told that 'others expressed their gratification at the conference'. It is evident that they were 'of the same opinion still', Dionysius himself[6] was not the first of the Alexandrians to oppose Chiliasm. There was much effort, both by him and others, to eradicate the concept before and after this Arsinoite conference. Yet we know that later on, villagers from this region became monks in the Thebiad, and manuscripts still surviving from the Thebiad, show that apocalyptic and Chiliastic literature was popular with the monks, generations, and even centuries, after the death of Dionysius. It is a notable example of the national character of the Egyptians. They let their aggressive and dominating superiors have their own way in appearance—but in appearance only. The underlying currents of thought remained essentially unchanged among the commonality. The resistance was passive—perhaps almost imperceptible—but it was real and persistent. In the case of Roman Africa—the country north of the Sahara Desert and west of Egypt—the problem is more complicated. In Roman times down to the Vandal invasion, the population of this region, leaving out of account certain small and relatively negligible numbers of Greeks, Egyptians and others found mainly in the larger cities, the population was composed of three distinct strata. At the top were the dominant Romans, insignificant in point of numbers but having the monopoly of government, law, and administration. They were practically undisguised exploiters; government officials whose main business was to forward corn and oil to Rome and incidentally enrich themselves; agents of the great Roman landlords intent on transmitting rents to their patrician employers—already in the time of Nero the Senatorial Province of Africa was owned by as few as nine landlords—absentee landlords living in Rome,—and finally, the numerous body of inferior agents; lawyers, money lenders, and estate managers whose services were indispensable to the carrying on of the vast system of economic exploitation.

Beneath this thin, dominant, Roman upper crust was a vast population of artisans, tradesmen, agricultural and other laborers,

[6] Cf. Eusebius, Eccl. Hist., VII, 24 seq.

serfs, and slaves. This great body of the commonality was to a remarkable degree still very purely Punic even in late Roman times. They differed ethnically, linguistically, religiously, and otherwise from their rulers.[7] We find St. Augustine, centuries after the Roman conquest, writing a letter in Latin to one of his clergy, but requesting him to translate it into Punic and communicate it to his congregation. It is useful to remind ourselves of the fact that the population of north Africa in the first centuries of the Christian era was much greater than it is now. Centuries of Mohammedan mis-government account for this in part but the chief cause is to be found in those profound climatic changes, the origins of which are still obscure, that have reduced to desolate and barren wilderness whole regions which in Roman times abounded in populous cities and in rich and fertile agricultural lands. This large population had the cohesion which results from centuries of similar and essentially unchanged social habits and it had also that sense of strength which comes from large numbers, and that pride which results from the inheritance of a proud history. They never wholly lost that spirit which had made their ancestors great. They never forgot that in former ages they had competed as the equals of Rome for the lordship of the world.

To the South toward the Desert and the Atlas Mountains dwelt a third section of the population. They were nomads or semi-nomads, troglodytes, and mountain peoples. Their manner of life remains essentially the same today as it was in Roman times and as it was for centuries before Rome set foot in Africa. The Romans never succeeded in subduing this population except temporarily and for short periods. The imperial government did what it could, and by means of military posts and patrols kept a kind of order, but its success was only moderate.

Christianity in Roman Africa reflects this threefold division of the population, as is to be expected. Cyprian, in spite of the sincere religious faith and high moral character which elevates him so high above the social class to which he belonged, is still the most typical hierarch of his age. In his writings we find the whole philosophy of the governing class translated into ecclesiastical language. It is highly significant that in all the numerous and voluminous writings of this Father there is not a line about Chiliasm. Ideas of such a

[7] Cf. Alex. Graham, Roman Africa.

nature found little reception in the minds of men daily engaged in the practical duties of making as much as possible out of the management and control of a vast population economically and politically subordinated to them.

It would seem that Chiliasm was in fact very largely confined to the Punic commonality. Tertullian is the great representative of this class. The very considerable success of his views can only be ascribed to their being acceptable to the general body of his local, Christian contemporaries. It is at least imaginable this success was due to the fact that the personal characteristics of this great African; his impetuosity, his boldness, his sternness, his pride, his vengeful spirit were truly representative of the psychology of the people whose spokesman he was. It is notable that he was perhaps the greatest of the Chiliasts.

The reader who has followed the argument thus far may be saying to himself at this point: "If it be granted that the national characters of the peoples of Phrygia, Egypt, North Africa or elsewhere, conditioned their acceptance of Chiliastic beliefs and the ways in which these beliefs found expression, what has that to do with the subject of this chapter which is Chiliasm and Patriotism?" It is to that point we shall now direct our attention, but what has been said above is necessary to the proper consideration of the matter. We have endeavored to show that in Phrygia, Egypt, and North Africa there existed nationalistic psychologies in the commonality. It will be recalled that we have shown in an earlier chapter the curious fact that Chiliasm, though originally a perfectly orthodox doctrine—indeed one of the most important portions of the true faith, nevertheless in the course of its historical development, became mixed up with heresies to a degree beyond any rational explanation by the law of chance or the rule of average. It would seem almost as though there was some natural affinity between this particular orthodox doctrine and almost any heresy; which finally resulted in its being itself condemned as heretical.

The reason for this was that Chiliasm, like the heresies, was a psychic equivalent for patriotism. No stranger or more unwarranted delusion is to be found in the whole range of church history than the one still unfortunately common, to the effect that for several centuries at the beginning of the Christian era the populace of whole

religions were obsessed with incredible zeal over the most abstruse, metaphysical speculations. It is indeed true that the ostensible objects of the conflict were philosophical ideas but the realities behind these symbols were tangibles of a very genuinely mundane order; economic exploitation, social inequality, and suppressed national patriotism. This is evident enough in cases like the Donatists in Africa, but a little consideration of the evidence in the light of the developments of the Freudian psychology, will make it clear in almost all of the heresies, and in the case of orthodoxy also, when the imperial government chanced to be itself heretical. So far as the writer is aware no study of any great length has been made of this matter, which would richly repay investigation; but our concern is more directly with Chiliasm and the larger problem must be left to others for solution.

Freud has shown beyond reasonable hope of successful refutation, that experiences which the mind has completely forgotten leave emotional 'tones' which remain active and are the determining cause of physical and mental conditions. A thought 'complex' is a system of ideas or associations with an especially strong emotional tone. A complex may be of extreme interest to an individual by reason of his social education and hereditary mentality and yet be out of harmony with e.g., security of life and property: so a conflict arises in the mind. This conflicting complex is gotten rid of in various ways; rationalization, repression, disassociation, or what not, but the energy or interest which initiated the complex remains none the less and something must become of its force. This undirected emotional force is the cause of dreams, neuroses, and psychic trauma.[8] Such in the most sketchy outline is Freud's idea. The application to the case under consideration is obvious. Patriotism was a repressed 'complex' to the peoples of Phrygia, Egypt, and Roman Africa. The mental conflict brought on by the repression was rationalized easily enough, no doubt, so far as the conscious mind of the populace was concerned, but the disassociated emotional energy was let loose on other concepts with which it had no proper connection originally, i.e., problems of philosophical speculation. Chiliasm was a speculative concept of a sort to make an especial appeal under the circumstances. So far as his conscious mind was concerned the Phrygian might be perfectly

[8] Cf. A. H. Ring, Psychoanalysis.

reconciled to Roman political supremacy. He might rationally prove to his own satisfaction that such political supremacy was really to his own advantage in the long run. Any idea of resistance was sure to be repressed by the certainty of losing his property and life. Yet the emotional energy of his patriotism remained and it naturally associated itself with any idea that lay at hand. Chiliasm happened to be at hand. The glorified, divine kingdom of the Saints of God on earth was the psychic equivalent of that Phrygian kingdom whose national existence had been forever extinguished by Rome. Similarly that national patriotism which under other historical circumstances might have found satisfaction in the glory of an independent Egypt now found expression in the borrowed phraseology of Jewish and Christian apocalyptical literature. The same is true of course of the Punic and Nomadic strata of the population of Roman Africa. To the new Jerusalem which was to come down out of heaven from God, these peoples transferred their now useless and hopeless longing for the Carthage of the days of Hannibal and for Jugurthan Numidia.

If, as we have endeavored to show, Chiliasm represented the strivings of repressed, national patriotisms, we can readily understand the increasing opposition it encountered on the part of the great dignitaries of the Church. As the Christian hierarchy became increasingly perfected, the desire of the prelates for unity and cohesion in the Church became correspondingly greater. But national patriotism is essentially a disrupting and disintegrating force to any imperialistic organization, civil or ecclesiastical. Chiliasm being associated with this separatist tendency, naturally came to be regarded as heretical, and as such, was suppressed.

CHAPTER V

CHILIASM AND SOCIAL THEORY

We have seen that in the first generations of the Church's existence the rapidly approaching end of the world was a doctrine firmly held by almost all Christians. We have seen how by the fifth century this doctrine, though doubtless still believed by small numbers of individuals and isolated groups, was practically dead. We have endeavored to show some of the more important political, economic, social, and religious effects of this belief and of its declension. The changes which took place almost imperceptibly during the course of more than three centuries in the status of this doctrine make any evaluation of its influence very difficult. It is, however, probably well within the truth to say that the transformation of early Christianity from an eschatological to a socialized movement is, in some respects, one of the most important changes in its history. The change was actual and objective rather than formal and theoretical. It profoundly influenced the practical lives of Christians, but it produced no alternation whatever in the creeds of the Church. As has been shown in the preceding chapters it is for these reasons at once more difficult to investigate and more troublesome to evaluate.

The difficulties of the subject itself, considerable as they are; lack of adequate source material, doubt as to the authenticity and reliability of such sources as we have; and ever present theological prepossession, these difficulties after all do not offer such hindrances to fruitful investigation as another factor, the present condition of sociological methodology. The writer is not learned in the various forms of scientific method, but he doubts whether any other science is, in this respect, in such a chaotic condition as sociology. It is reasonable to expect of any science that it will have some general rules for the investigation of the data in its field, and some general principles for the interpretation of the results of investigation. Sociology is no exception in this respect. In fact the number of sociological 'principles,' so called, is almost incredibly great. A mere descriptive enumeration of them, and a by no means exhaustive one, fills a considerable volume.[1] But so far as the writer is aware, no

[1] L. M. Bristol, Social Adaptation, *Harvard Economic Studies*, Vol. XIV. Cambridge 1915.

effort has been made to apply these principles or any considerable number of them, systematically, to the elucidation of any movement, contemporary or historical. In general each principle has had its own advocates who have applied it to varying ranges of historical phenomena—generally to the total or at least considerable, exclusion of other principles.

These sociological principles are not only very numerous—they are of very various value. No successful classification of them has thus far been made. It is very possible that in the present state of the science no successful classification can be made. Yet no study of an historical movement can, without loss, dispense with the aid given by these general sociological principles. The writer will, therefore, in the briefest possible manner, try to show some of the aspects of early Chiliasm as they appear in the light of a few of these principles.

The list of principles employed is not an exhaustive one. It can not even claim to be comprehensive of all the principles which might fairly be said to be important. On the other hand it perhaps includes some principles which some sociologists would probably consider of minor importance. There is as yet, unfortunately, no considerable agreement on this matter among sociologists of different nationalities and schools. The reason of course, is that the social reality which these principles endeavor to explain contains facts which are intellectually incompatible but which nevertheless, do actually exist together.

One of the most important and one of the most convenient methods of investigating social phenomena is the statistical method. In all cases of social pathology this method is so valuable as to be almost indispensable. In other cases its use needs to be more carefully guarded. In the problem we have considered the use of the statistical method has been evidently impossible except in the most incidental manner. We do not know how many Christians expected any particular kind of Second Advent to take place within any given length of time. If we had information for each decade to the time of Augustine, of the number of 'convinced' Chiliasts and the number of 'adherents' who were inclined toward that belief, together with information as to the number of years within which each of these groups expected the Second Advent, it is needless to say that such facts would enable us to judge the movement with a considerable

approach to historical certainty. Even such incidental and fragmentary information as has come down to us in regard to the number of Chiliastic believers is most valuable and such use has been made of it as may be. If the use of the statistical method has not been more extensive, it is because of lack of data.

Perhaps the most widely known of all sociological principles is that called Economic Determinism, or the Economic Interpretation of History, or Historical Materialism. More and more, of recent years, this principle has been employed by historians. The classic statement of the doctrine is found in the Communist Manifesto. The Introduction to the second edition states: "In every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class, struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes."[2]

In the application of this principle to our subject we are lead to expect a genuine, though not necessarily direct, connection between the declension of eschatological expectations, the increase of socialization in early Christianity and such broad economic movements as resulted from the soil exhaustion of Western Europe and the decreased productivity of compulsory associated labor. In the substitution of serfdom for slavery and in the growth of monasticism we certainly have two movements which profoundly affected the Church, and had a considerable part in altering the attitude of mind which made Chiliastic expectations tenable. It is probably true that what we have here is considerably more than a mere coincidence of time, i.e., that Chiliasm declined as serfdom developed and was dead by the time the patronage system was established on the great estates. Indeed, in the West at least, Chiliasm was dead before the country regions were to any measurable degree Christian at all.

It is not too much to say that the apologetic used by St. Augustine to extirpate primitive, Chiliastic belief was only made plausable, or ever possible, by profound changes, of an economic nature, in the

[2] Communist Manifesto. Authorized English Translation, Chicago, 1898.

early Church. The central point of Augustine's apologetic is that the Church, as actually existing at the time, was the promised kingdom of Christ and the reign of the Saints on earth. Such an explanation would have been absurd in the days when the Christian Church consisted only of a few, small companies of sectaries, lost among the lower strata of the population of the cities on the Mediterranean litoral. But by Augustine's time the Church was something quite different. It was enormously wealthy; owning farms, orchards, vineyards, olive yards, mines, quarries, timberlands, horses, cattle, sheep, goats, slaves and serfs, to say nothing of the purely ecclesiastical properties like Churches, schools, bishops' residences and similar structures, and the land they occupied.

The possession of this great wealth inevitably brought with it social position, prestige, and political power. The psychical reaction produced by wealth, rank, and power was naturally unfavorable to the growth of any lively desire for the termination of the existing order of things. Indeed it was an active force in displacing and eliminating Chiliasm from the minds of the hierarchy. On the reverse side we have seen that the times of persecution, when the property of the Church was confiscated and the lives and liberty of Christians endangered or lost, coincided with the recrudescence of Messianic expectations. So that, whichever way the subject is approached, it would seem that the contentions of the advocates of the economic interpretation of history can make out a very good case in the instance of the early Christian Church and Chiliasm. Without raising economic determinism to the rank of a dogma and while admitting that it has very real limitations, it would nevertheless appear from the present study, that the following contention of one of its leading exponents contains an important degree of truth. "The relations of men to ane another in the matter of making a living are the main, underlying causes of men's habits of thought and feeling, their notions of right, propriety, and legality, their institutions of society and government, their wars and revolutions."[3]

A principle somewhat allied to the doctrine of Economic Determinism, is that of progress by 'Group Conflict.' Perhaps the most notable exponent of this principle is the Austrian sociologist, Ludwig Gumplowicz, who states: "When two distinct (heterogen) groups

[3] W. J. Ghent, Mass and Class, Chap. 1. New York, 1905.

come together the natural tendency of each is to exploit the other to use the most general expression. This indeed is what gives the first impulse to the social process.[4]

According to this principle we should expect to find the cause of the transformation of early Christianity in the conflicts of various groups within the Christian community and in the conflicts between the Christians as a group, and various other groups in the world of that time. The truth of this is so obvious that it is a mere waste of words to point it out. That Christian theology evolved by a series of conflicts with various pagan theologies on the one side, and with various groups within the Church on the other side, which were successively branded as heretical, is the most patent fact in the theological history. What is true of the theology in general is true of Chiliasm in particular. It was very largely during the conflicts with a long series of heretical groups; Gnostics, Ebionites, Alogi, Montanists and Apolinarians that the blows were given which finally vanquished Chiliasm. Its elimination, or at least the rapidity of its elimination, was very measurably due to the fact that it was involved in these group conflicts, and as it was almost invariably associated with the losing group, it suffered the natural fate of the vanquished.

While the principle of which Gumplowicz was so able a supporter leads us to expect changes in the Chiliastic doctrine wherever it appears in connection with the phenomenon of group conflict, both within and without the Church, this principle does not, in itself, enable us to state anything definitely concerning the nature of these changes.

There is, however, another sociological principle which we can call to our aid—the principle of Imitation. According to M. Tarde: "The unvarying characteristic of every social fact whatever is that it is imitative and this characteristic belongs exclusively to social facts. This imitation however, is not absolute and the various degrees of exactness in imitation and the complexes resulting from the various combinations and oppositions of imitations form the dynamic of progress."[5]

[4] Grundriss der Sociologie; Moore's Translation, p. 85. Annals Am. Acad. Pol. Sci. Phil. 1899.

[5] G. Tarde, Social Laws, p. 41. New York, 1899. The Laws of Imitation, p. 22. New York, 1903.

By the help of this principle we can in a certain measure estimate the general nature of the changes which took place in early Christianity during the process of its socialization. The conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity is, according to this principle, merely half of the actual occurrence. The other half might be called the conversion of Christianity to the Roman Empire. The fact that this second conversion took place; that the Christian Church became a hierarchic, bureaucratic, legalistic, monarchical imperialism is evidence enough that the principle of Imitation operated powerfully in early Christian history.

What is true of the early Church as a whole is true of Chiliasm in particular. There was no very powerful Second Adventist or other Chiliastic influence in the heathen world with which the early Christians were in contact. Their beliefs were, therefore according to this theory, weakened by dilution; vice versa the pagans were gradually converted to an enfeebled eschatological belief by imitation of the Christians, but the net result was a compromise, i.e., a far off and indefinite eschatology.

The concrete evidence in support of this contention is not abundant being confined to a few lines in the Sibylline Oracles, Hippolytus, Lactantius and Augustine. Such as the evidence is, however, it is entirely on the side of the theory of imitation. It is moreover a very defensible position that if we were not dealing with such a stereotyped literary form, the evidence would be much stronger. One arresting feature of the Chiliastic passages that have come down to us, is their uniformity. They are repetitions, very often actual, verbal repetitions of one another. What is of real interest in this connection however, is not the form of words, used, but the varying degrees of earnestness, sincerity, and eagerness with which the beliefs, embodied in the form, were held. This is a thing difficult if not impossible of measurement. Practically our only means of arriving at the facts is to compare the relatively slight changes in the *form* of the Chiliastic tradition. This has already been done[6] and favors the contention which the theory of Imitation seeks to maintain. The passage in the Oracles, while undoubtedly Chiliastic, is doubtfully orthodox and is found in a context showing the influence of paganism in almost every line. Similarly Hippolytus and still more Lactantius and

[6] See Chap. I.

Augustine being situated so as to be peculiarly susceptible to the pagan environment show a marked tendency to make the Second Advent a far off event. St. Augustine, whose contact with the contemporary pagan world was more complete at more points than that of any other Church father, puts the Second Advent out of all connection with his own generation.

Another sociological principle of considerable importance for our purpose is that sometimes spoken of as the transfer of the allegiance of the unproductive laborers. The most prominent upholder of this principle is probably the Italian economist Achille Loria. According to Loria, the history of civilization is the history of the struggle for the economic surplus. The existence of an economic margin above the necessities of subsistence at once divides society into three classes: exploiters, unproductive laborers,[7] and productive laborers. "In order to exert moral suasion enough to pervert the egoism of the oppressed classes, the cooperation of unproductive laborers is required. The decomposition of an established system of capitalistic economy carried with it a progressive diminution of the income from property and consequently involves a corresponding falling off in the unproductive laborers' share therein. This in turn dissolves their partnership with capital and puts an end to their task of psychologically coercing the productive laborers. The bandage is thus suddenly removed from the eyes of the oppressed and the systematic perversion of human egoism up to this time in force, is abruptly brought to an end.

But scarcely has the inevitable course of events hounded to its grave the existing order of oppression, when there arises another. Under the new system of suppression the ancient alliance between capital and unproductive labor is reestablished and at once inaugurates a new process better adapted to pervert the egoism of the productive laborers."[8]

The importance of this principle for the understanding of our subject cannot easily be overstated. The socialization of early Christianity proceeded in almost direct ratio to the number of 'unproductive' laborers coming over to it. If Christianity had had in the First Century, such an array of theologians, philosophers,

[7] i.e., The so-called, Intellectuals.

[8] Economic Foundations of Society, pp. 51 seq. New York, 1889.

apologists, statesmen, and intellectuals generally, as it had in the Fourth Century, there can be no reasonable doubt that its triumph would have been much more rapid and complete. On the other hand had the Pagan cults been able to show as numerous and as able a body of intellectual defenders in the Fourth Century as in the First, the success of the Church must have been much retarded. The declension of the artistic, literary, and general intellectual level of ancient, pagan civilization during the first three or four centuries of the Christian era is a fact so well known as to call for no remark. What is not perhaps, so well recognized is that during the very time that the pagan world presents an almost incredible degree of intellectual feebleness and sterility, the actual proportion of intellectually able men in society was remarkably great. Rome, never, perhaps in her whole history, had to her credit so many men of statesman-like ability as at the time her empire was falling to pieces. The explanation is simple. The men of genius and ability were no longer interested in the political fortunes of the pagan empire. They had gone over to a new allegiance, and expended in the foundation of the Catholic Church a degree of intelligence and ability which, had it been placed at the service of the Empire, might very conceivably have enabled that Empire to survive to this day.

It is certain that one of the leading causes of the collapse of the pagan cults was their increasing inability to command the support of the intellectual leaders in society, and it is no less true that the increasing success of the Church was to be ascribed to the ever larger number of men of intellectual gifts who enrolled themselves in her support. The fact, of course, is that Christianity offered increasingly an outlet for the expression of abilities and capacities of mind and soul such as no pagan cult could provide. The most superficial comparison of the intellectual forces for and against Christianity in the first century, with the corresponding array in the fourth or fifth centuries is sufficient to show the enormous progress made by the process of socialization in the interval.

Our more particular concern is, however, with the eschatological concepts. A comparison of the supporters and opponents of Chiliasm at different periods brings into clear view the rate of its decline. Without repeating what has been dealt with already,[9] it is sufficient

[9] Cf. Chap. I.

to recall that in the first century Chiliasm had the support of men like St. Paul and the authors of the Gospels and other New Testament books, notably Revelation. Indeed, as far as we can judge, every intellectual leader of the Christian movement for nearly a century supported the apocolyptic concepts. But as time went on the proportionate number and ability of its defenders declines. Finally in the person of Origen in the East and Augustine in the West we find the undisputed intellectual leaders turning the whole intellectual class against it, and so bringing about its overthrow.

Still another sociological principle of high importance because of its pervasiveness and ubiquity is that propounded by Prof. Veblen in what is perhaps the best known of American works on sociology.[10] This principle, which may be summed up by the words Conspicuous Honorific Consumption, is that beliefs and customs, in order to establish themselves and to survive as socially reputable, must involve their holders in purely honorific consumption of time and economic goods. This consumption may be, and in fact very largely is, vicarious. In this case the functionaries of the vicarious extravagance must be distinguished from their masters by the introduction of the element of personal inconvenience into the performance of their functions.

Of the various sociological principles, so far brought to our attention this one of Conspicuous Honorific Consumption gives us what is probably the most useful clew to follow for the understanding of the relatively rapid decline and the immediately subsequent social disrepute of the eschatological elements in early Christianity. No set of theological concepts can be easily imagined which are more antagonistic to the canon of honorific, conspicuous consumption than are the eschatological ones.

But the principle of the reputability of waste is so intercalated into every form of social usage; it plays so large a part in all moral, religious, literary, artistic, political, military, and other judgments, that in a society like that of the Roman Empire where pecuniary emulation and invidious comparison were the forms taken by the 'instinct of workmanship'—the propensity for achievement—no set of beliefs or observances which ran counter to this principle could, in a prolonged contest, stand the smallest chance of success.

[10] The Theory of the Leisure Class. New York, 1899.

In this respect, early Christianity was the more unequal to the struggle in so much as it was the strongest in the cities. The trend of affairs is observable in the Church as early as the appearance of the Epistle of James. Under urban conditions the law of conspicuous consumption works with peculiar power and it tended toward the rapid elimination of those doctrines and observances which operated to keep out of the Church the wealthy, powerful, and fashionable elements of society. Within a relatively short time, by the operation of this principle, the originally respectable doctrine of Millenananism was rendered disreputable and even heretical. It was an important agency in bringing into sharp relief the distinction of clergy and laity, while in the appearance of monasticism we see the working out of this principle among the strongest (theoretical) opponents.

Had Christianity in the beginning found a considerable proportion of its adherents among the laboring classes in the rural regions there can be very little doubt that it would have maintained the purity of its early doctrines for a much more considerable period of time than was actually the case. There is no reason to doubt that, in that event, Chiliastic expectations would have survived in Christian theology far longer than they did. "Among the working classes in a sedentary community which is at an agricultural stage of industry in which there is a considerable subdivision of property and whose laws and customs secure to these classes a more or less definite share of the product of their industry, pecuniary emulation tends in a certain measure to such industry and frugality as serve to weaken in some degree the full force of the principle of honorific, and more especially of vicariously honorific wastefulness." That is to say such conditions tend to conservatism in general and possibly to religious conservatism in particular. But for this very reason Christianity made its way only very slowly into the rural regions. In the West, indeed, Chiliasm was already dead before the Church had won any great headway among the agricultural population—which was not until the sixth and seventh centuries. Had Chiliasm been able to hold its own until the conversion of the rural regions, it would certainly have survived there for generations if not centuries—even if it had died out in the urban centers.

In the East, where Christianity made its way among the rural population, at least in some degree, considerably earlier than was

the case in the West, Chiliasm did get a hold in certain agricultural regions of Phrygia, Syria, Egypt, and elsewhere, and it was in precisely such regions, as we have already seen, that it was held most tenaciously and abandoned most slowly.

Prof. F. H. Giddings of Columbia University is the sponsor of the last sociological principle which will be mentioned in this connection. His principle is known as the "Consciousness of Kind." According to Prof. Giddings: "Consciousness of Kind is that pleasurable state of mind which includes organic sympathy, the perception of resemblance conscious or reflective sympathy, affection and the desire for recognition."[11] "This consciousness is a social and socializing force, sometimes exceedingly delicate and subtle in its action, sometimes turbulent and all powerful. Assuming endlessly varied modes of prejudice and of prepossession, of liking and of disliking, of love and of hate, it tends always to reconstruct and to dominate every mode of association and every social grouping."[12]

By means of this very comprehensive principle many otherwise merely stray and isolated items of information that have come down to use regarding early Christianity can be given a place and a meaning in the graduated series of phenomena which mark the transition from the eschatological to the socialized movement. Such, for instance, are the exhibitions of consciousness of kind according to differences and similarities of sex, age, kinship, language, political beliefs, occupations, rank, locality, wealth, and the like. The very number of ways in which consciousness of kind exerts influence makes this principle of very great use when the task is that of forming a general conclusion from the investigation of sources which are incomplete, inconclusive and sometimes contradictory.

The different sociological principles mentioned above are intended as specimens only. The list is not in any sense complete. No attention is paid to other principles held as coordinates or as correlates of those referred to. Whole classes of principles, the anthropological and geographic, for instance, are consciously omitted. The list is in the highest degree a hit-and-miss selection and the more casual it is, the better for the purpose in hand. This purpose is to show that any given series of principles elucidated by students of our contemporary

[11] Inductive Sociology, p. 99, New York, 1901.

[12] Descriptive and Historical Sociology, p. 275, New York, 1906.

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modern civilization, will be found to have been operating in discernable fashion in the case of an obscure form of theological speculation in the first centuries of the Christian era. That Chiliasm was the natural result of the heredity and environment of the early Christians, or perhaps better, the natural result of the reaction of inherited elements in vital contact with the contemporary world, will probably be admitted readily enough by anyone who has followed the discussion thus far. But the aim of this thesis, particularly of this last chapter, is something more than that. Its aim is to uphold the contention that the forces now operating in society to shape and reshape beliefs and opinions are the very same in kind as operated in the society of the Roman Empire. In short, any explanation of early Christian Chiliasm which seeks to bring in the operation of any social principles which cannot be shown to be objectively operative in contemporary society is to be viewed with a certain measure of doubt, if not of suspicion.

It may be taken as a safe assumption that all attempts to obtain a complete explanation of any historical event in terms of one principle of one science are foredoomed to failure. The same is true, in less degree, even if we take all the so far discovered principles of any one science. In order to give anything like a really comprehensive explanation of the historical process which forms the subject of this thesis there would be required the contributions of the principles of economics, political science, psychology, and the other social sciences. Such a synthesis of principles is beyond the ability of any one individual. The application of them all to our subject would be a task requiring the cooperation of many specialists in many lines for some not inconsiderable period of time. The writer's task will not perhaps have been utterly in vain, if he has, even in the slightest measure, helped to bring home to a single reader, this important fact.

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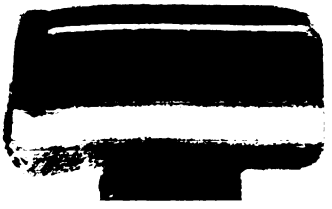
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